

Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 8

THE APARTHEID WAR MACHINE

THE STRENGTH AND DEPLOYMENT OF
THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARMED FORCES



International Defence & Aid Fund

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THE APARTHEID WAR MACHINE

IDAF FACT PAPER ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

NO.8 (APRIL 1980)

South Africa is now among the most militarised states in the world. Between 1970-80 the South African Defence Force (SADF) became virtually self-sufficient in armaments manufacture and increased its military manpower threefold. If all reserve and civil defence personnel are included, every other white male of military age is now in a state of actual or potential mobilisation, together with a growing number of white women and black men.

Since 1972 the SADF has been in military occupation of Namibia in defiance of the United Nations. Most current SADF operations are in Namibia and, through strikes across the border, in Angola. Recent events have shown how closely South Africa, has been militarily involved in Rhodesia. Inside South Africa, the SADF is active in defence of the apartheid system. Army units are deployed in the rural areas to discourage the people from joining or supporting the liberation movement, and there have been increasing clashes with guerilla units operating inside the country. A sophisticated border defence system is now being established to protect the white heartland of apartheid.

This Fact Paper describes how the size and strength of the SADF, taken with the role that it is being trained to play in Southern Africa, make it a formidable war machine, repressing the political aspirations of the people and attacking neighbouring states. The factual study of South Africa's "total war" strategy includes details of military spending, arms procurement and conscription, together with brief accounts of SADF actions in Namibia, Angola, Rhodesia and South Africa.



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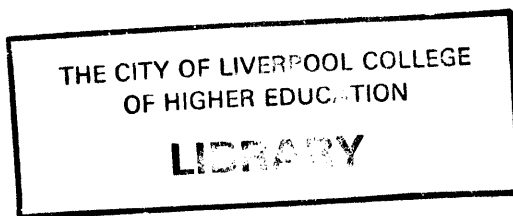
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The International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa has the following objects:-

1. To aid, defend and rehabilitate the victims of unjust legislation and oppressive and arbitrary procedures;
2. To support their families and dependants;
3. To keep the conscience of the world alive to the issues at stake.

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INTRODUCTION

“The military threat against the Republic of South Africa is intensifying at an alarming rate and the country is being thrown to an increasing degree on its own resources in order to ensure survival”.

Mr. P. W. Botha, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and of National Security, 1979 Defence White Paper.

In the past decade the eyes of the world have increasingly been focussed on the unfolding situation in Southern Africa. With the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in 1974 and the subsequent escalation of the struggles for liberation in Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, white minority rule has been faced with a steadily growing threat.

The South African state, uncompromisingly committed as it is to the maintenance of white supremacy, has responded to the increasing levels of organised political and military resistance by throwing all its energy into the concentration of resources in a massive military build-up.

The extent to which the population of South Africa has been controlled, conditioned and mobilised behind this effort will be reflected throughout this Fact Paper, which describes how the Nationalist Party government has created a large and well-oiled military machine to defend its interests. This machine is capable not only of safeguarding white supremacy in the Republic and of occupying the territory of Namibia, but also of attacking other countries in Southern Africa and thus posing a very real threat to world peace.

The election of Mr. P. W. Botha, Minister of Defence, as South Africa's new Prime Minister in 1978 is symbolic of the changing face of South African political repression since the election as Prime Minister in 1966 of his predecessor, Mr. B. J. Vorster, then Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons. The police state of the 1960's has become the military state of the 1970's and beyond.

1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE STRATEGY

The basic tenet of the South African government's philosophy, as expressed in the 1977 White Paper on Defence, is that "the principle of the right of self-determination of the White nation must not be regarded as being negotiable." Military strategy is accordingly seen as forming part of a broader national strategy to ensure that the white minority does not relinquish its political ascendancy.¹

The Nationalist Party government's defence strategy has undergone significant developments in the past twenty years, developments which need to be seen within the perspective of the struggle for liberation in Southern Africa as a whole.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the maintenance and extension of European rule in Southern Africa was predominantly a military matter, and the British Army fought several campaigns as a result. From the beginning of this century, popular resistance to white rule took the form of protest and programmes of non-violent action and the "security of the state" was therefore left largely in the hands of the legislature, the judiciary and the South African Police (SAP).² This was consolidated after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, when dozens of laws were passed entrenching apartheid practices and suppressing all opposition; those who resisted were arrested, detained and imprisoned.

The shooting of peaceful demonstrators at Sharpeville in 1960 and the subsequent banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) resulted in a crucial development in resistance strategy. In 1961, both organisations announced the launching of the armed struggle through their newly formed military wings, Umkhonto we Sizwe (ANC) and Poqo (PAC). While some members of these movements remained underground in South Africa, others set up bases in exile, thus establishing for the first time a concrete, external military threat to the regime. Despite relatively effective sabotage campaigns in the early 1960's organised by both Poqo (as a result of which 11 PAC members were sentenced to death and executed and others imprisoned) and by Umkhonto we Sizwe (for which many ANC members were imprisoned including those convicted with Nelson Mandela in 1964) the liberation movement subsequently found itself hindered by geography.

Until 1974, South Africa was surrounded by a protective barrier of states that were sympathetic to its policies and defence. Angola and Mozambique were under the control of the Portuguese colonialists, Rhodesia under white minority rule, Namibia effectively regarded as a fifth province of South Africa, and, despite attaining independence in 1966 and 1968 respectively, Botswana and Swaziland remained economically dependent on South Africa to a significant degree. The third former Protectorate, Lesotho, is completely surrounded by South African territory.

However the 1960's had also been crucial years as far as the development of popular revolutionary nationalist movements in Southern Africa was concerned, with armed struggle being launched in Angola (1961), Mozambique (1964), Namibia (1966) and Rhodesia (1966). Gradually these movements increased their pressure on the white-ruled administrations in these territories.

In this period, the South African defence strategists were not unaware of the threat posed by the growing momentum of the various liberation struggles to the Nationalist government's security. Indeed in 1967-8 a joint force from the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the South African ANC undertook a campaign in Rhodesia, and South Africa consequently sent a force of paramilitary SAP units to aid the Smith forces and gain experience in counter-insurgency warfare.³ From 1966 the SAP and SADF were also involved in conflict with the guerillas of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the military wing of SWAPO, in the Caprivi Strip. In April 1973, then Defence Minister Mr. P. W. Botha warned Parliament thus: "I do not wish to spread alarm, but I must state unambiguously that for a long time already we have been engaged in a war of low intensity".⁴ Annual defence spending had in fact increased from R44 million in 1960 to R472 million in 1973, an increase of almost 1,000%.⁵

However, as the guerilla threat had not yet gained an effective foothold on South Africa's own borders, there was at this date still a relative amount of complacency in defence circles, as reflected in an in-depth article in *Armed Forces Journal International* in June 1973 where it was stated that "... South Africa faces no real threat from its immediate neighbours. ... None of these are likely to launch an attack against South Africa, or even countenance harbouring an 'Army of Liberation' within their borders."⁶ Defence priorities in 1973 were still seen as the "prevention or suppression of internal disorder instigated from outside Africa" and "controlling and meeting any threats to its sea lanes".⁷

The 1974 coup in Portugal, which was to a large extent precipitated by the growing successes of the liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, changed the situation in Southern Africa. As a direct result the level of actual and potential conflict in Southern Africa rose to an extent that had not been predicted within such a short time scale. The victories of FRELIMO in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola in 1974-5 provided the Namibian, Zimbabwean and South African liberation movements with vigorous stimulation and inspiration and, more importantly, with political and military support in addition to that already furnished by other "front-line" states.

South Africa's strategists perceived the implications of these events. As the 1977 Defence White Paper observed, "developments in Africa and elsewhere have today thrust the RSA ... into the foreground where the attainment of National Security Aims is directly affected by the occurrences and trends of thought beyond our borders".⁸

Accordingly, as this Fact Paper shows, there has been a shift in defence policy. Military force and control is now at the centre of the strategy to preserve apartheid, rather than being one aspect among several. The

strength of the SADF has been hugely increased, with a dramatic growth in conscripted manpower and a defence budget which rose from R472 million in 1973 to R1,899 million in 1978. The domestic arms industry has been rapidly expanded, and measures have been introduced to integrate the civilian economy into the war effort. What can best be described as a "war psychosis" is in the process of being created amongst the white civilian population, with other political and economic goals being subordinated to the needs and demands of the Defence Force.

Most significantly, perhaps, military objectives and policy have been integrated to a far greater extent than ever before into the machinery of government. The SADF is today no longer seen as a necessary tool of government, but is instead an increasingly powerful force within the government itself. South Africa is now a military state, armed to defend the interests of the white minority against the desires of the people for a free, unified and non-racial society.

2 'TOTAL WAR' AND THE MILITARY STATE

"We already exist in political, economic, ideological and military circumstances usually associated with a state of war."

Maj. Gen. W. Black, Director-General, (Operations) SADF, 1977.¹

In 1973, the South African White Paper on Defence announced that it was not government policy "to base our national defence on military capability alone." The Preface to the 1975 White Paper took this a step further in a general statement that "all countries need to muster all their activities, including political, economic and diplomatic, for their defence." It was only in 1977, however, that this new policy was spelt out in specific terms, with the statement that "it is therefore essential that Total National Strategy be formulated at the highest level . . . the maintenance of the sovereignty of the RSA is the combined responsibility of all government departments."

STATE SECURITY COUNCIL

The wheels of this process had in fact begun rolling in 1972 with the establishment of the State Security Council. The Council, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, comprises the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Police, the Secretary for Security Intelligence, the Chief of the SADF and the Commissioner of the SAP. Its function was, initially, to advise the government with regard to the formulation of national policy and strategy and to determine intelligence priorities.² In 1973 the Defence Advisory Council was established to give advice specifically to the Minister of Defence. Its membership includes the Chief of the SADF, retired senior officers of the SADF³ and heads of private industry.⁴

However, it was only in the 1977 Defence White Paper that a clear indication was given for the first time that these functions had moved from "advisory positions" towards interdepartmental co-ordination. Starting from the premise that "we are today involved in a war", the White Paper described the threat to the regime as a co-ordinated confrontation in the military, political, economic and psychological spheres. To maintain the security of national objectives, the government has laid out its plan for defence, and the role of the SADF, on an integrated, interdepartmental basis, reflecting the view of the military strategists that "the involvement of the entire nation in the maintenance of law and order and in the defence of the RSA"⁵ is now a necessity. This view was summarised later in 1977 by Gen. Malan, Chief of the SADF, when he said that "South Africa is today . . . involved in total war. The war is not only an area for the soldier. Everyone is involved and has a role to play."⁶

This concept of "total war" is more than a rhetorical expression; that it is becoming a reality is demonstrated throughout this study.

Since the election of Mr. P. W. Botha as Prime Minister in October 1978 there have been further indications of South Africa's militarisation. Mr. Botha's election, and his retention of the key portfolios of Defence and

National Security demonstrate this process. On a personal level Mr. Botha has long had the reputation of being one of the most "hawkish" and uncompromising members of the South African Cabinet; as Minister of Defence he has worked closely with the Generals of the SADF⁷ and these long-standing loyalties have borne fruit. For example, during the talks held in Pretoria in October in 1978 between South Africa and the Western Five "Contact" Group over Namibia, Mr. Botha's right-hand man was the Chief of the SADF, Gen. Magnus Malan.⁸ A few weeks earlier, it had been proposed to send a military man, Maj. Gen. J. J. Geldenhuys, Officer Commanding SWA Command, to the United Nations' negotiations on Namibia. (This proposal could not be carried out, owing to "operational commitments" in northern Namibia⁹). Senior officers of the SADF are clearly playing an increasing role in the politics and general administration of the South African government, and the same trend can be discerned in the number of markedly political speeches that have been made by SADF generals in public appearances, to mobilise the population behind the "war effort".

Mr. Botha's accession to power meant more, however, than the arrival of a few new faces in the apartheid power structure. Almost immediately after coming into office, Mr. Botha re-arranged the basis of strategic planning and administration in a way which reflected his military perspectives. Under his predecessor, Mr. Vorster, state security at the highest level had been the responsibility of Mr. Vorster's right-hand man, Gen. van den Bergh, as chief of the now defunct Bureau of State Security (BOSS). Both Mr. Vorster and Gen. van den Bergh had retired in the wake of the Information Department scandal, and BOSS had been transformed into the Department of National Security (DONS) with apparently reduced powers. When Mr. Botha took over, he promoted the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI) which had long resented BOSS's pre-eminence, and made the two departments operate in direct conjunction under the Prime Minister, Gen. Malan (the Chief of the SADF) and Mr. Kobie Coetsee, Botha's newly promoted Deputy Minister of Defence and of National Security.¹⁰

The process of militarisation can also be seen in the promotion of the State Security Council to a much more central position. The SSC has now shed its advisory role and, according to the 1979 Defence White Paper, now "conducts" the national strategic planning process. Thorough co-ordination at all levels is achieved through a proliferation of interdepartmental committees, subordinate to the SSC. The present structure is described on page 2 of the 1979 Defence White Paper:

Planning at National Interdepartmental and Departmental Levels

5. Preparation for modern warfare, whether conventional or unconventional, necessitates highly co-ordinated action. This is particularly true of a total onslaught such as is being waged against South Africa. Thorough planning at all levels is therefore required in order to obtain such co-ordination.

6. At national level the Cabinet is assisted by the State Security Council (SSC) and its executive agencies to fulfil duties concerning the national

security of the RSA. The Department of the Prime Minister is responsible for management at this level by issuing guidelines, total national strategy directives, and total national strategies concerning national security. The national strategic planning process is conducted by the SSC with its Work Committee and Secretariat and fifteen interdepartmental committees of the SSC, while co-ordination of the executive function is carried out by a National Joint Planning Centre.

7. At interdepartmental level national security is co-ordinated by the fifteen interdepartmental committees, the chairmen of which are responsible for the management of the individual committees. These committees process the total national strategy directives of the SSC into interdepartmental strategies which are co-ordinated at the level of the Work Committee and approved by the SSC.

8. The national strategic planning process is a continuous planning activity demanding a great deal of integration and co-ordination. Although responsibility for this process is vested in the Department of the Prime Minister and in the chairmen of the fifteen interdepartmental committees the heads of government departments are continually involved in this process.

9. At departmental level national security is conducted by the heads of government departments by means of a departmental organisation which constantly keeps abreast of developments concerning aspects of national security. Departmental directives and strategies formulated at this level are used by executive officials of the various departments as a framework for the drawing up of appropriate plans. A joint planning process has been introduced to ensure that the directives and strategies at the various levels and within the sections of a department are successfully implemented.

At the beginning of August 1979 Mr. Botha announced plans for the extension of the powers of the State Security Council in measures to control all significant policy decisions of government departments and semi-state organs such as the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) and the Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) far more directly.¹¹ The SSC clearly appears to have taken over from the Cabinet as the key decision-making body.

The causes and implications of this trend towards centralised military rule have been voiced on a number of occasions. In March 1977, Gen. Malan stated that there were conflicting requirements between those of "a total strategy" and those of "the democratic system of government".¹² This view was subsequently endorsed by Mr. P. W. Botha in a speech to Parliament.¹³ At around the same time a "senior Nationalist MP" was quoted as having told the *Sunday Express* newspaper that "the government would not be able to meet future demands without giving the heads of the defence force a definite say in the decision-making process in the country, and that South Africa may ultimately be ruled by a civilian-military junta".¹⁴ A similar idea was spelt out in 1978 by Lt. Gen. J. Dutton, Chief of Staff (Operations) in the SADF when he said "the requirements for the application of total strategy would appear to favour a system of unified command, joint central planning. . . . Conventional organisations in democratic systems do not as a

rule lend themselves to these procedures. Therefore organisational changes would appear to be imperative¹⁵.

The necessary organisational changes are now in the process of being implemented. While in its present condition South Africa can hardly be classified as a democratic state, the political implications are clear.

3 A MILITARY ECONOMY

THE DEFENCE BUDGET

The growth of military spending is one of the clearest indications of the development of South Africa into a military state. Table I shows the massive increases in the defence budget from R44 million in 1960¹ to R1,972.4 million in 1979.² The Minister of Defence has on numerous occasions stressed that even the large amounts of state revenue voted for defence are not enough, but have to be accepted in the given economic conditions.³

In fact, total state spending on defence is somewhat higher than the defence estimates, as approved by Parliament. In 1977, for example, the Defence Budget was set at R1,654 million, while the figure given in the Defence White Paper of the same year was R1,940.4 million. The discrepancy arises from the fact that some military spending is undertaken by other departments; thus the construction of new military bases is paid for by the Department of Public Works, housing for SADF personnel is financed by the Department of Community Development, and the cost of intelligence gathering is partly borne by the Treasury Vote.⁴

To obtain an even fuller picture of all spending on state security, one would also have to include the amounts allocated in 1978, for example, to the Police (R232.5m), the judiciary (R166.8m), related state services (R44.5m), fuel and strategic minerals (R382.9m) and other strategic areas such as the huge amount put aside for the construction of new roads (approx. R140m). Inclusion of these areas gives an approximate total expenditure of R3,000 million in 1978; of this roughly two-thirds is direct military spending.

In 1975 a new system of cost accounting was introduced by the Department of Defence⁵ which makes a detailed long-term picture hard to establish. However Table II gives a clear indication of both the rise in and the range of defence spending since 1975. Of particular significance is the dramatic increase in the amounts for Landward Defence (from R461.8m in 1975 to R1,134.9m in 1979) and Logistic Support (from R238.1m in 1975 to R510.7m in 1979) reflecting the operational nature of the SADF's priorities. The table also reveals that between 1975 and 1980 over R4,000m has been channelled into the acquisition of weapons and related "capital investments".

Despite the large sums of state revenue it consumes the Defence Department has also needed to raise funds from other sources.

In 1976 two schemes of Defence Bonds were implemented to further increase defence income.⁶ Defence Bonus Bonds are operated as a lottery for individual citizens with regular prizes of up to R20,000⁷ and raised almost R30 million between October 1977 and March 1978.⁸ A R50,000 advertising campaign to sell these bonds to blacks was launched in 1978.⁹ The more lucrative scheme is the sale of National Defence Bonds which are bought by private industry and local authorities. Between July 1977 and June 1978 approximately R240 million was invested in this scheme.¹⁰

In 1978 Armscor (whose armaments manufacturing function is described below) was allowed to enter the domestic capital market for the first time, in a further attempt to raise funds outside the state budget for military spending.¹¹

Table I
DEFENCE BUDGET (cash votes) 1958-1979

	<i>Rm</i>	
1958/9	36.0	
1959/60	40.0	
1960/1	44.0	
1961/2	72.0	
1962/3	129.0	
1963/4	157.0	
1964/5	210.0	
1965/6	229.0	
1966/7	255.0	
1967/8	256.0	
1968/9	252.7	
1969/70	271.6	
1970/1	257.1	
1971/2	321.5	
1972/3	335.0	
1973/4	472.0	
1974/5	692.0	(707.0)
1975/6	970.7	(1,043.5)
1976/7	1,350.0	(1,407.6)
1977/8	1,654.0	(1,940.4)
1978/9	1,899.2	(1,976.3)
1979/80	1,972.4	(2,189.0)

These figures reflect cash votes as indicated in the Annual Estimates. The figures in brackets are an indication of total defence expenditure from all government departments as published in the biennial White Paper on Defence.

Table II

BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL DEFENCE EXPENDITURE 1975-80

<i>Programme</i>	<i>'75/6</i>	<i>'76/7</i>	<i>Rm</i> <i>'77/8</i>	<i>'78/9</i>	<i>'79/80</i>
Command and Control					
Operating Costs	76.6	92.9	112.8	116.0	136.3
Capital Costs	23.7	3.1	62.2	54.2	43.8
Total	100.3	95.0	175.0	170.2	180.1
Landward Defence					
Operating Costs	223.3	283.3	424.9	510.3	556.3
Capital Costs	238.6	361.7	482.2	498.6	578.6
Total	461.9	645.0	907.1	1,008.9	1,134.9
Air Defence					
Operating Costs	20.5	25.5	79.6	50.2	38.6
Capital Costs	42.5	46.3	46.1	40.3	35.6
Total	63.0	71.8	125.7	90.5	74.2
Maritime Defence					
Operating Costs	26.3	31.5	33.3	36.1	30.3
Capital Costs	59.6	130.7	198.8	75.4	97.2
Total	85.9	162.2	232.1	115.5	127.5
General Training					
Operating Costs	53.1	43.0	61.9	63.0	64.0
Capital Costs	11.3	28.8	6.3	8.4	16.1
Total	64.4	71.8	68.2	71.4	80.1
Logistic Support					
Operating Costs	154.5	218.7	250.8	274.8	299.5
Capital Costs	83.6	78.3	137.5	201.3	211.2
Total	238.1	297.0	388.3	476.1	510.7
Personnel Support					
Operating Costs	11.5	10.9	16.7	15.4	24.8
Capital Costs	15.7	20.2	22.7	28.4	54.0
Total	27.2	31.1	39.4	43.8	78.8
General SADF Support					
Operating Costs	2.7	3.7	4.6	3.9	4.1
Total Defence Requirements					
Operating Costs	568.5	709.5	984.6	1,069.0	1,152.8
Capital Costs	475.0	698.1	955.8	907.3	1,036.2
TOTAL	1,043.5	1,407.6	1,940.4	1,976.3	2,189.0
% of State Expenditure	15.0	17.0	19.0	16.3	16.6

Source: biennial White Papers on Defence 1977 and 1979.

NEW LEGISLATION

Two significant pieces of legislation have been introduced since 1970 which are aimed at streamlining the economy for war-time adaptation.

The National Supplies Procurement Act, No. 89 of 1970 gives the Minister of Defence the power "when necessary for the security of South Africa" to order "any person who is capable of supplying, manufacturing, producing, processing or treating any goods, or has the power to dispose of, or has in his possession or under his control any goods, or is the supplier to any service, to manufacture, produce, process or treat and to supply or deliver or sell it to the Minister. . . ."¹² This power was first used at the end of 1975 to meet a shortage of tents required for troops in Angola.¹³ It will no doubt be used in future similar circumstances, and is seen as a means of safeguarding supplies threatened by the possible withdrawal of foreign firms involved in strategic industries. Thus an inter-office memo within the General Motors Corporation, one of the largest US interests in South Africa, in July 1977 recognised that "in the event that a National Emergency is declared, there is little doubt that control of GM's South African facilities . . . would be taken over by an arm of the Ministry of Defence. . . ."¹⁴ The memo also points out that General Motors S.A. has been requested to "supply vehicles such as the K25, K31, 4 x 4 LUV for Defence Force purposes and refusal to offer such might be interpreted as reflecting doubt on the motives of the Company."¹⁵

The second piece of legislation was introduced in 1974 and enhanced the planning and controlling powers of the Minister of Defence. The Defence Special Account Act, No. 6 of 1974, significantly modified a previous Act¹⁶ in establishing an account for finances to "be utilised to defray the expenditure incurred in connection with such special defence activities and purchases . . . as the Minister of Defence may from time to time approve."¹⁷ The significance of this Act is that though expenditure still has to be approved by the Minister of Finance and the account is ostensibly designed to aid armament procurement on a long term basis, it is not liable for state audit. This means that the Minister of Defence, by merely signing a certificate of clearance, has the power to allocate the funds where he deems fit without being accountable in any way whatsoever to anyone outside the Department of Defence.¹⁸ Such freedom of expenditure clearly gives the Minister and his colleagues in the SADF great power, particularly when the amounts involved are so large. Of the R1,654 million 1977 Defence Budget, for example, just over R1,000 million, or over 60% was allocated to the Defence Special Account.¹⁹ Mr. P. W. Botha and his generals thus have a billion rand to spend as they wish.

IMPORTED ARMAMENTS

The Defence Special Account enables the SADF to purchase arms abroad without revealing their sources. This is necessary because of the steady pressure on other countries to cease supplying arms to South Africa.

All modern military machines are built around their major weapon systems, and sophisticated weaponry is the key to any viable defence

structure. In the 1950's and early 1960's, the SADF was based on British tanks and armoured personnel carriers, British infantry weapons and artillery, British and American aircraft and British naval vessels.²⁰ The acquisition of these weapon systems took place over a period of time and by the early 1960's the flow of armaments from Britain and the USA into South Africa was well established.

On 7 August 1963, the Security Council of the United Nations passed Resolution 181 which called upon "all States to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles to South Africa".²¹ France and Britain abstained from this vote. A further resolution (182) was passed unanimously on 4 December 1963 which added to 181 "the sale and shipment of equipment and materials for the manufacture and maintenance of arms and ammunition in South Africa".²² Despite promises from the U.S.A. since 1963 and Britain in 1964 and 1974 that they would abide by this advisory arms embargo, both countries continued to allow supplies of sophisticated weapon systems, spare parts and weapons-related technology.

From the mid-1960's onwards France also became one of the chief arms suppliers and the Federal Republic of Germany stepped up its technological aid. With the establishment of its own armaments industry, Israel also joined the ranks of South Africa's allies in the arms trade, as did Italy. With growing international pressure, the suppliers have sought more discreet channels for the transfer of weapons, using intermediaries. The United Nations has published a number of well-documented reports on the collusion between Western companies and South Africa indicating that unpublicised armaments contracts have been regularly implemented.²³ The weapon systems and equipment possessed by the SADF, and their sources are catalogued in Chapter 4 below.

In November 1977 the United Nations Security Council for the first time imposed a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa.²⁴ Although this contains a number of loopholes, it makes the overt supply of major military contracts distinctly embarrassing to the countries concerned. France, for example, immediately cancelled a number of orders, including the delivery of four warships which were nearing completion. It is clear that the mandatory arms embargo has made suppliers considerably more cautious in their dealings with South Africa.

MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The mandatory arms embargo came as no shock to the South African government. It had long anticipated international isolation and from the early 1960's began to develop a programme for the creation of a domestic military-industrial complex to render the state self-sufficient in the manufacture and supply of armaments. Arms production started in 1961 with the manufacture of ammunition and has been expanding ever since.

In 1964 with assistance from private industry two state organisations were established:²⁵ the Armaments Board, for purchasing arms and maintaining quality and cost control in production, and the Armaments Development

and Production Corporation (Armcor), the controlling body for armaments manufacture.²⁶ A third body, the National Institute for Defence Research (NIDR) had been formed in the 1950's under the wing of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to be responsible for all weapons research and development.²⁷ In 1967 a special committee was appointed to investigate various armaments organisations abroad and subsequently the French "DMA" military-industrial system was chosen as a model for the development of the South African arms industry.²⁸ In 1976 the responsibilities of the Armaments Board were taken over by Armcor in an attempt to streamline the industry and in 1978 the bulk of research being carried out by the NIDR was also brought directly into Armcor.

Armcor, according to its chairman, Cmdt. Piet Marais, "is part of and exists only to render a service to the SADF. The aim of course is to procure and manufacture arms at the lowest possible cost. . . . The Defence Force is responsible for determining new types of weapons that it requires to defend South Africa, and expansion of existing lines. After these have been defined, we come into the picture. Through a joint committee, they state their needs relative to the external threat, then we state our capabilities of meeting those needs within cost and time limits."²⁹

Armcor's turnover in arms procurement increased from R32m in 1968 to R979m in 1978.³⁰ It controls nine nationalised manufacturing subsidiaries and distributes work to over 1,200 private industry contractors and sub-contractors.³¹ Its policy is to give as many of the SADF contracts as possible to the private sector. Its own subsidiaries are responsible for those weapon systems regarded as of especial strategic importance and those which are uneconomical for private production. Armcor and its subsidiaries manufacture weapons, ammunition, pyrotechnical products, aircraft, electro-optics and missiles. Contracts handed out to the private sector include those for armoured vehicles, operational vehicles, vessels, radar and computers, telecommunications, weapons electronics, maritime technology and electronic warfare.³² About 25,000 contracts were handed out to private sector manufacturers in 1976.³³

In 1977 the Minister of Defence stated that, excluding the French contract for naval vessels, 75% of the arms budget was being spent inside South Africa "and this percentage is rising every day". He added that two-fifths of this local expenditure was going directly to the private sector, while the balance went to Armcor subsidiaries which in turn spent up to 80% of that amount on sub-contracts with private industry.³⁴

The private sector is thus deeply involved in armaments manufacture for the SADF. By 1976 three-quarters of all locally-produced weaponry and 80% by value of the SADF's heavy ammunition requirements were produced in the private sector.³⁵ According to the 1979 White Paper on Defence 800 private companies are involved in Armcor contracts or sub-contracts, directly contributing to the employment of approximately 100,000 employees (not including the 19,000 employed by Armcor itself).

With growing international isolation and a relative decrease in foreign investment in South Africa, together with the effects of economic recession which have been apparent in recent years, the military-industrial complex

sustained by Armcor and the SADF is playing an increasingly important part in the South African economy. This view has been put by a number of leading industrialists and economists.³⁶ Over 400 companies now rely to a significant extent on defence contracts.³⁷ Indeed private industry and finance, facing recession in other areas, is eager to gain a share of the weapons market. The SADF is regarded as one of the most secure clients – whatever recession there might be will not basically affect the material needs of the SADF, even though the cost is an ever-increasing defence budget. In 1978, as mentioned earlier, Armcor was allowed to enter the capital market for the first time, thus linking the finance sector directly to military affairs.

Since Mr. P. W. Botha's rise to power strategic links between the private sector and the state have been further strengthened. Influential industrialists have been brought into the previously civil-servant controlled Public Service Commission, responsible for the overseeing of State expenditure,³⁸ and in May 1979 Mr. John Maree, an executive director of Barlow Rand, one of South Africa's largest corporations, was seconded to Armcor for three years in chief executive position.³⁹ Mr. Botha has been praised by industrialists for his "pragmatism", his preparedness to depart from "well-established government approaches" in his pursuit of economic efficiency, and his ability to "cut through red-tape" in his dealing with the private sector.⁴⁰ According to Mr. "Punch" Barlow, late chairman of Barlow Rand, there is a sharply growing appreciation in government circles of the importance of the role of private enterprise, and relations between government and the private sector have never been better.⁴¹

One of the most impressive achievements to date is in the field of guided missiles. Research was begun in the early 1950's and developed until in the late 1960's a group of South African scientists from the NIDR went to France with the design for the Crotale surface-to-air missile (known in South Africa as the Cactus). This missile was then manufactured in France by CSF Thomson, 80% subsidised by South Africa, and is now in use in a number of countries.⁴² The NIDR subsequently handed over its project to two Armcor subsidiaries, Kentron and Lyttleton Engineering Works, and Kentron is now responsible for the development and manufacture of missiles.⁴³ In April 1979 Mr. Botha announced that a new air-to-air missile, completely produced in South Africa (though remarkably similar in specifications to the French Matra R550 Magic) had come into SAAF service.⁴⁴

By 1969 the SADF was being locally supplied with most basic armaments, including rifles, mortars, ammunition, grenades, bombs (including napalm) and mines.⁴⁵ Major developments along the road to self-sufficiency have been the local manufacture of jet aircraft Impala I (1967)⁴⁶ and II (1974)⁴⁷, and Mirage III (1973)⁴⁸ and F1 (1976)⁴⁹ and Panhard armoured cars, all under licence, as well as tanks,⁵⁰ missile ships⁵¹, 90mm field guns⁵² and infantry combat vehicles.⁵³ According to Lt. Gen. R. H. D. Rogers, Chief of the South African Air Force, there is a SAAF team which continually examines foreign purchases with a view to local manufacture and 4,000 items, previously bought overseas, are now being made locally.⁵⁴

Owing to these developments, the impact of the mandatory arms embargo

Table III
ARMSCOR AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

<i>Company</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Role (where known)</i>
Armcor	Pretoria	Planning, administration
Atlas Aircraft Corporation	Kempton Park Waterkloof Ysterplaat	Aircraft manufacture and design
Eloptro	Kempton Park	Design and manufacture of electro-optical systems
Kentron	Pretoria	Design and manufacture of guided missiles
Lyttleton Engineering Works	Verwoerdburg	Largest manufacturer of weapons, including artillery and others
Musgraves	Bloemfontein	Rifles
Naschem	Braamfontein	Explosives, propellants and ammunition
Pretoria Metal Pressings	Pretoria	Ammunition
Somchem	Somerset West	Explosives
Swartklip Products	Cape Town	Chemical research?
Sandock Austral (not a member of Armcor but one of the largest producers)	Boksburg Durban	Panhard cars, Ratel APC and other armoured vehicles; shipyard produces naval vessels

Source: Salvo, Armcor house magazine (monthly) 1978/9

was not severe, although there remain serious gaps in the SADF arsenal, particularly in the field of large naval vessels and long-range maritime patrol aircraft.⁵⁵ The withdrawal of licences for the manufacture of military equipment simply means that South Africa no longer has to pay the parent companies a royalty on each item produced.⁵⁶

The logical development in this fast growing industry is a move into the field of exports. In the words of Armcor chairman, Cmdt. Marais, "it is not sound economics to establish an armaments industry purely for your own requirements."⁵⁷ In 1978 Mr. P. W. Botha stated that South Africa had in fact begun to export major weapon systems.⁵⁸ According to a report by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the government exported over R18 million worth of arms between 1972 and 1976, mostly, but not all, to Rhodesia.⁵⁹ Given South Africa's wealth of strategic minerals and the availability and regulation of cheap migrant labour, it is quite likely that Armcor will be able to market weapon systems at competitive prices in the

international arena. There are a number of countries – for example in South America – that are only too willing to deal with South Africa, and Armcor is confident of securing these markets. During 1979 the SADF exchanged visits with military officials from, amongst others, Paraguay, Chile, Taiwan, South Korea and Indonesia. Moreover, those governments anxious to import arms from South Africa are equally willing to export arms to the SADF, and it is probably through indirect channels such as these that South Africa will be able to acquire those items of technology which it has not yet been able to produce.

ELECTRONICS

Sophisticated electronic technology, including computers, is now a vital part of almost every weapon system, and one in which South Africa has hitherto been largely dependent on foreign suppliers. However, local South African companies, assured of government contracts, are now establishing themselves in the private sector electronics industry, often by taking over foreign interests.

Thus Allied Technologies, South Africa's largest electronic component manufacturer and supplier, took over the interests of the ITT(US) South African subsidiary STC(SA) in 1977.⁶⁰ Barlow Electronics, a division of one of South Africa's largest corporations (its late chairman sat on the Minister of Defence's Advisory Council), now controls the operations of GEC⁶¹ while Racal Electronics, a major British supplier to the SADF, has been taken over by a third South African company, Grinaker Holdings.⁶² The last deal was "encouraged" by Armcor.⁶³ These moves are indicative of strategic considerations: as it moves towards a war economy, South Africa cannot afford to have essential military supplies under foreign control. According to Armcor chairman Cmdt. Marais, "there's no company controlled from overseas that does a lot of work for us".⁶⁴

Electronics and computer contracts with overseas manufacturers can render the South Africans vulnerable to political action, as the recent case of Plessey (GB) shows. The British firm sold a computer-linked radar system to South Africa, allegedly for dual use in civil and military air traffic control. Part of the deal involved an agreement to train South African technicians to operate the system. In mid-1979 it was revealed that several SADF personnel were actually in Britain under this agreement, being trained in computer technology. Although Plessey denied that the contract was in contravention of the arms embargo, on the grounds that the main use of the system was civilian, the incident was embarrassing and the British Government felt obliged to tell Plessey not to train any more SADF members in Britain.⁶⁵

As well as the take-over of foreign firms to avoid possible difficulties, there has also been an expansion of domestic manufacture in the electronics field. The two other major companies involved are Messina (Electronic) Development Company, which concentrates on design and development of the local industry⁶⁶ and one of Armcor's subsidiaries named Eloptro, which

designs and manufactures at its Johannesburg factory a wide range of electro-optical instruments for use in sophisticated weapons systems.⁶⁷

Altogether, South Africa is now impressively though by no means completely self-sufficient in armaments. The military-industrial complex centred on Armscor has developed steadily, and it will clearly continue to provide a comprehensive arsenal for the SADF. Together with the ever-increasing amounts of public money spent, and the involvement of private industry in many areas of defence needs, the military effort is clearly penetrating the South African economy as well as the machinery of government. It is also in the process of pushing South Africa into the international arena as a middle-power arms producer and supplier – with potentially serious consequences for peace elsewhere in the world.

4 THE MILITARY STRUCTURE

The SADF traditionally has its roots in the British military system. This is still evident in many Citizen Force units, such as a number of the “Highlander” regiments that still retain their ceremonial dress. During the 1950’s, however, there was a concerted effort to develop a peculiarly South African defence structure. The Swiss and Israeli military systems, have over a period of time, been used as models¹ to create a structure with a small, regular Permanent Force (PF) nucleus which administers, trains and provides leadership to a large part-time Citizen Force (CF) and localised militia groups, the Commandos.

SADF Generals perceive the threat that faces them as one of an “escalating and de-escalating nature” and have thus organised the SADF in such a way that on the basis of short-notice mobilisation, a force can be established of varying strength to meet the particular threat without having to maintain a huge Permanent Force that is more expensive and, they argue, too inflexible for meeting the demands of a guerilla war.² An example of this was seen at the end of 1975 when the SADF was able to double its operational force in Namibia and Angola within a couple of weeks through the mobilisation of Citizen Force units.

This chapter deals with the organisation and equipment of the SA Army, Navy and Air Force; establishment and manpower are dealt with below in Chapter 5. A preliminary point needs to be made, however. A distinction has to be made between the deployment of “peace time” and “operational” forces. “Peace time” deployment involves the establishment and maintenance of a sound defence infra-structure throughout South Africa irrespective of any particular threat. “Operational” deployment requires a high concentration of forces in any area in which fighting or other actions are occurring.

Thus within South Africa, the SADF is divided into nine territorial commands (including SWA Command which, since 1977, has gradually been transformed into a semi-independent operational command) which are responsible for the basic administration of all units based in their areas. They are also responsible for defence commitments in their areas, particularly through the maintenance of Commando units in a permanent state of potential mobilisation. Certain of the territorial commands, such as Western Province, based in Cape Town, have at present far less operational responsibility than others, such as North Western Command which covers most of the rural areas bordering on Botswana, where guerilla actions have already taken place.

THE SA ARMY

The Army is by far the largest arm of the SADF, employing over 80% of its troops and taking up over half of the budget even though it relies far less on sophisticated weaponry than the Air Force and Navy.³ It consists of members of the Permanent Force (PF), the National Service component,

the Citizen Force (CF), and almost the entire Commando force, serving in infantry, armour, artillery and logistical support, maintenance and service units.

The *Infantry* is the backbone of the SADF and consists of eight white national service battalions, two black battalions⁴ and approximately 100 CF battalions.⁵ (The Commandos and Parachute Battalions, both of which are basically infantry units, are dealt with in separate sections below).

A basic infantry battalion consists of three rifle companies, armed with R1 rifles (the South African manufactured NATO FN rifle now being replaced by the lighter R4) and Bren light machine guns, each supported by a section of 60mm mortars; a support weapons company made up of Vickers machine guns, 81mm mortars, 89mm Bazooka and 106mm Recoilless Rifle anti-tank weapons⁶ together with with an "assault pioneer" platoon, responsible for mines, other explosives and basic engineering; and an HQ company, responsible for leadership, administration and immediate logistical support. While this is the standard line-up, units vary depending on their resources and the nature of their particular responsibilities when deployed.

In operation, troops are transported by German Unimog troop carriers and the South African-made Ratel Infantry Combat Vehicles, as well as being supported by Puma and Super Frelon helicopters that can carry up to a section (10 men) and almost a platoon (35 men) of infantry respectively. Given the nature of the guerilla struggle being waged the infantry is forced to carry out most of its operations on foot. In Northern Namibia, for instance, few roads are considered to be safe to use regularly for fear of landmines and so helicopters are playing a crucial role in the movement of troops.

The infantry has three basic roles in the present conflict; firstly to police the operational areas and keep in constant contact with the local population, and secondly to patrol the area, searching out and engaging guerilla units. This is the basis of all counter-insurgency operations. Thirdly, conventional infantry operations, launched into neighbouring states in conjunction with SAAF attacks, are increasingly becoming a standard facet of SADF strategy.

Given the nature of the terrain and the struggle, the SADF's *Armour* is not founded on the traditional tank. The basic weapons employed are the more mobile Panhard cars (manufactured in South Africa under French licence), the AML90, armed with a 90mm cannon and the AML60, armed with a 60mm mortar, and both carrying a .50in Browning machine gun. There are three national service and approximately 15 CF armoured units.

Tanks, namely the British Centurion and, according to one source,⁷ the French AMX-13, are also in service but kept in reserve for use in conventional-type situations or deployed in stationary positions as artillery. The effectiveness of the Panhard units was seen in the SADF's initial lightning thrust into Angola in 1975. In standard counter-insurgency operations the Panhards are usually deployed for reconnaissance and patrolling purposes in three-car troops.

The *Artillery* consists of one national service and approximately 15 CF field artillery units and one national service and approximately ten CF

anti-aircraft units. As in the case of armour, the role of the artillery in counter-insurgency operations is limited. The field artillery has traditionally relied on the 5.5in (Second World War British), 25-pounder (Canadian), Abbot 105mm self-propelled (British) and Sexton 88mm self-propelled (Canadian) guns, but more recently the regime has manufactured a large number of a modified version of the 25-pounder, the 90mm field gun, and has acquired a number of 155mm self-propelled guns from the United States.

In the first half of 1979 the SADF announced the addition of the G5 155mm gun to its strength, claiming that it was comparable with the best in the world. Though the government has insisted that this is a 100% locally manufactured weapon, substantial evidence has emerged to suggest that the G5, which can utilise all variations of NATO 155mm ammunition, has been built with the technology and under the direct guidance of a North American company, Space Research.⁸

According to current SADF estimates, for every combat soldier in the field in counter-insurgency operations, 3.5 men are needed in support roles.⁹ That is to say that in any military area over 70% of the troops directly or indirectly deployed are required for *Logistic Support* and related services. This support covers a variety of functions, including the administration and distribution of supplies and equipment, the maintenance of equipment, communication networks and supplies, construction of roads and bases and the basic administration of the operation, from command and intelligence to postal deliveries.

For operations in Namibia it was necessary for a huge new logistic support base to be established at Grootfontein.¹⁰ In South Africa itself, military training bases have been erected over a period to provide each strategic area with at least one major base that can be easily transformed into an operational HQ.

In 1978 the SADF announced that steps were being taken to expand the role of *Paratroopers* by the establishment of a Parachute Brigade.¹¹ Prior to this two national service battalions had been the only units used operationally in this role. It appears that plans for the Parachute Brigade involve maintaining a far larger full-time (including PF and national service units) and part-time (CF) force on permanent standby. This is a logical development in the SADF's counter-insurgency strategy. Basic infantry units are deployed on the ground to search out and engage guerilla units. Once the initial contact has been made a follow-up operation is launched involving helicopter gunships, other infantry units and, of greatest importance, the dropping of paratroopers.

Paratroopers are regarded, second only to the Reconnaissance Commando, as the Army's elite troops owing to the stringent physical requirements demanded and the intensive training the units receive. In operational deployment paratroopers are based at strategically located airfields and sections of the unit are on permanent standby, to be dropped into operation in minimal time.

The South African equivalent of the British Special Air Service (SAS), the American Green Berets, the Israeli Commandos and the Rhodesian

Selous Scouts, is the *Reconnaissance Commando*. This unit, known as the Recce's (sometimes spelt "reckies") has to date maintained a low public profile; they will no doubt play an increasingly important military role as the guerilla war develops.

Recce recruits have to sign up for a minimum of three years, the time it takes to complete a comprehensive training programme that includes parachuting, skydiving, deep sea diving, mountain climbing, unconventional and unarmed combat and advanced explosives. Most members of the unit are professional soldiers and include a number of foreigners.¹²

Late in 1979 it was revealed by the SADF that one of the Recce Commando's training bases is on the Donkergat peninsula at Langebaan Lagoon near Cape Town, where 4 Reconnaissance Commando is housed in old whaling station buildings. Troops here specialise in seaborne tasks, using large motorised rubber dinghies, in addition to their other training. Newsmen were told that the Donkergat base was established in July 1978. It was also disclosed that the Recce Commandos operate directly under the Chief of the SADF.¹³ They thus operate outside standard operational structures, and are a law unto themselves.

The name Recce is to a certain extent misleading. Though they are called upon to carry out dangerous reconnaissance work, Recce's are usually deployed in small units assigned to specific combat tasks outside the framework of standard military operations. In operation they often do not wear SADF uniforms – for instance they were deployed in Angola in the guise of Portuguese mercenaries – and sometimes carry Soviet-made weapons.¹⁴

While few details are available, it is known that the Recce's are recruiting an increasing number of black troops.¹⁵ Black Recce troops (and suitably disguised whites) have been deployed to masquerade as guerillas or other armed forces to perform acts of atrocity in the name of "terrorists".¹⁶ The activities of the Rhodesian Selous Scouts are by now well enough documented to demonstrate the extent to which forces of this kind can be successful in creating confusion and mistrust among sections of the population and in providing adverse propaganda for the liberation forces.¹⁷

The Afrikaner guerilla units of the Anglo-Boer War have continued through the years to be a source of inspiration to the SADF. Although they carry the same name as their predecessors, the *Commandos* today play a different, yet crucial, role in the SADF.

The Commandos are localised militia groups that may to some extent be compared to the National Guard in the USA and the war-time Home Guard in Britain although the sophistication of organisation and level of mobilisation is far higher. Commandos are basically similar to CF infantry battalions without the full balance of support weapons. They consist largely of volunteers and although some units are deployed in the operational areas, their major task lies in defending the particular area in which they are permanently based.¹⁸ Training concentrates on developing an intimate knowledge of the unit's geographical area of responsibility and regular military exercises with the object of ensuring that the unit is aware of all

potential guerilla strategies and the most effective means of countering them. With over 250 Commando units in a constant state of semi-mobilisation,¹⁹ the potential of this arm of the SADF, which to date has not been put to the test, is substantial.

In rural areas the Commandos are in constant communication with the local farmers, most of whom are in fact members of their local unit, and are meant to be ready to move into operation whenever necessary. In the urban areas the Commandos are in touch with both local military authorities and civil defence organisations, also ready to respond at short notice.

An important development in the defence structure in the past few years has been the establishment of Commando units at many industrial sites. All plants recognised as key point industries are being encouraged to establish such units. An example of this development can be found in the 1977 document from General Motors (SA) which called for the establishment of a unit consisting of white and Coloured employees to defend their Port Elizabeth plant against sabotage or "civil disturbance."²⁰

It is believed that once this structure reaches the peak of its present expansion, almost 90% of all white civilian males not serving in CF units will be members of Commandos, along with a growing number of white women and blacks,²¹ who are being gradually accepted in supportive roles in a number of units.

One of the crucial elements of the SADF's "Total War" strategy is, as the name suggests, the involvement of every member of the white population in the process of defence. In this respect, in 1976 the regime instructed every municipality and local authority to establish and provide facilities and funds for the maintenance of a *Civil Defence* organisation.²²

The main function of civil defence organisations is to be prepared and take responsibility for the maintenance of essential services within each community in times of natural and military emergency and, according to the SADF, this role excludes the use of military arms. However, given the fact that over 750,000 white South Africans possess civilian light arms²³ and given the broad legislative definition of civil defence "to provide for the protection of the Republic and its inhabitants in a state of emergency and for other incidental matters"²⁴, it is clear that CD organisations are also being established as second-line/vigilante groups for assisting the Commandos and police in the maintenance of "law and order" and the suppression of dissent.

There are now over 600 civil defence organisations based throughout the country,²⁵ operating in liaison with local authorities, Commandos, police and territorial commands. A blueprint laid out by the Chief of Staff (Operations) SADF in 1976 describes the extent of organisation involved in each civil defence area in the following manner: "The area is divided into two or more wards, normally according to geographic location. Ward leaders plus the Managers of Emergency Services could constitute the local civil defence committee under the chairmanship of the Chief of Civil Defence of the area. Every ward in turn is divided into a number of cells. The cell would normally comprise a limited number of families living in close proximity to one another. A cell leader is appointed to advise and co-ordinate the action of householders in his cell, and most important of all, to

Table IV
SA ARMY - MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEMS IN SERVICE

Type	Manufacturer	No.	Remarks	
ARMOUR				
Tanks				
Centurion Mk10	UK	150	{ Delivered from UK. Jordan and India (via Spain). Believed to be on order. Sales unconfirmed. Believed to be used for training purposes	
Merkava	Israel	30+		
AMX-13	Fr./SA	80 (approx)		
Sherman	US	?		
Comet	UK	?		
Armoured Cars				
Panhard AML-245/60	Fr./SA	800+	Manufactured under licence in SA.	
Panhard AML-245/80	Fr./SA	400+		Manufactured under licence in SA. 460 delivered 1963-9; almost obsolete.
Ferret	UK	100		
Armoured Personnel Carriers				
Saracen	UK	250	700 delivered 1956-66; almost obsolete. 320 believed ordered. 400 ordered via Israel. In service since 1977; still in production.	
Commando V150	US/Portugal	100		
M-113A1	US/Italy	150+		
Ratel	SA	600+		
ARTILLERY				
Field				
25-pounder (88mm)	UK	30	112 delivered 1951.	
Sexton s.p.g. (88mm)	Canada	30	180 delivered 1946.	
M.7 Priest s.p.g. (105mm)	US	?	World War II issue; rebuilt in SA.	
90mm FG	SA	150+	Still in production World War II issue; being replaced by 155mm.	
5.5 inch (140mm)	UK	?		
M109 s.p.g. (155mm)	US	20+	Delivered 1976. Being manufactured in SA with Canadian technology.	
G5 155mm	SA/Canada	100+		
Anti-Tank				
17 pounder (76.2mm)	UK	100	234 delivered 1956.	
106mm Recoilless Rifle	US	?	Delivered via Israel 1977. 138 delivered 1955-6. To replace ENTAC.	
ENTAC ATGW	France	120		
Milan AT Missile	Fr./FRG	?		
Anti-Aircraft				
20mm 204GK	Switzerland	?		
35mm twin K-63	Switzerland	?		
40mm L-70	Sweden	?		
3.7in. (88mm)	UK	?		
Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAAF)				
Cactus/Crotale	Fr./SA	30+	Initially manufactured in France; now in production in SA. Delivered via Jordan 1974.	
Tigercat	UK	54		

Sources:

DMS Market Intelligence Report (US, 1976); National Reconnaissance Office Report (US, 1976); Sean Gervasi "Breakdown of the Arms Embargo against South Africa" (Congress testimony, US, 1977); *Air International* (UK, May 1976); *Flight International* (UK, 6.10.78); C. Foss, *Artillery of the World* (New York, 1974); International Institute of Strategic Studies *Military Balance* (London, annual); John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies* (London, 1978); Bernard Marks, *The South African Army* (Johannesburg, 1977); *Armies and Weapons* (Monaco, December 1978).

initiate on-the-spot activity. In this way the civil defence organisation aims at involving every man, woman and child in the country."²⁶

In March 1979 Mr. P. W. Botha announced that owing to operational commitments, the SADF could not use its own time or resources to assist civil defence, but stressed the urgent necessity for the fast development and smooth running of these new militias.²⁷

THE SA AIR FORCE

The SA Army is supported by the SA Air Force (SAAF) which forms a modern, effective strike and support force that plays a crucial role in most military operations.

The SAAF has its HQ in Pretoria, operates through four commands – Strike, Transport, Maritime and Light Aircraft – and is in the process of expanding and modernising its major bases to maintain maximum operational potential. The completion of a new base in the Eastern Transvaal in 1978²⁸ was but one step in ensuring that every region of strategic importance, both in South Africa and the neighbouring states, is within easy reach of SAAF fighters deployed in minimal time.

Most members of the SAAF belong to the Permanent Force, although there are a number of volunteer CF pilots who serve on a regular part-time basis, as do the members of the Air Commandos. National servicemen in the SAAF serve on the ground in support and service capacities.

Largely based in the Transvaal, *Strike Command* has three major responsibilities; reconnaissance, interception and ground attack. High level and tactical reconnaissance is carried out by British BAC Canberras (also used as bombers) and French (manufactured in South Africa) Mirage IIIRZ's and R2Z's²⁹. It is believed that the SAAF possesses some of the most up to date equipment and techniques for photo-reconnaissance work³⁰, which is of particular importance in the planning of pre-emptive strikes into the front-line states. Details of all aircraft and weapons are given in Table V.

For airborne interception, Mirage III CZ and F1 CZ interceptors, armed with French air-to-air missiles are deployed to protect South African air space and cover Air Force and Army operations from air attack in neighbouring territories.

Mirages, the F1 AZ and III EZ, also form the core of the SAAF's ground attack force, armed with air-to-surface missiles. The major targets of ground attack squadrons are guerilla bases and refugee camps, and the administrative and economic centres of front-line states. The SADF and Armscor's first major manufacturing success (under Italian licence), the Impala MB 325M Mk1 (a 2-seater jet trainer) and MB 326K Mk2 (a 1-seater ground attack fighter) have also proved to be effective in counter-insurgency operations.³¹

Transport Command plays a crucial role in enabling the Army to carry out its operations. American Lockheed C-130's and L-100's (sold by the USA as "civilian" planes) and European Transall C-160's make up the heavy

transport fleet that is used for moving troops, equipment and supplies. Douglas C-47 Dakotas (delivered from the USA in the 1950's) are still used extensively, notably for the transport of paratroopers. British Hawker Siddeley HS 125's and American Swearingen Merlin's (both delivered in the 1970's) are used to transport key personnel and small supply loads (see Table VI).

Maritime Command's major responsibility lies in patrolling the South African coastline and for this it employs ageing British Shackletons (recently refitted and resparred)³² and Italian Piaggio Albatrosses. British Buccaneer S Mk50 jet fighter bombers are also employed for reconnaissance, as well as being held in reserve for strike capacities. In its attempt to convince NATO of the importance of the Southern Indian and Atlantic oceans, the SADF has for some time been urging the organisation of a more comprehensive and modern maritime fleet.

Light Aircraft Command has two components, a permanent operational wing and the Air Commandos. The permanent wing is deployed in operational areas performing tasks such as low-level tactical reconnaissance, casualty evacuation and light transport. It flies American Cessna CE-185's and Skywagons, Italian AM.3CM Bosboks and the Atlas C4M Kudus (this last designed and manufactured in South Africa, based on the Bosbok).

The Air Commandos consist of at least 12 volunteer squadrons of civilian owner-pilots who are trained to provide light support. Most of the aircraft flown in these units are believed to be of American origin.³³

Though *Helicopters* perform tasks within the various commands, their role requires special attention. In March 1979 the Chief of the SAAF stated that the SADF now realised the importance of the role played by helicopters in counter-insurgency strategy.³⁴ These craft are deployed in direct conjunction with Army units and are used for a variety of tasks. The largest, the French Super Frelon SA-321 L, is used extensively for the transport of supplies and the dropping and retrieving of infantry patrols. Puma SA-330's and Alouette II SE 313's and III SA-316's (both French) are used as gunships, providing air cover and following up guerilla contacts, and for casualty evacuation. Pumas are also used to transport a section (10 men) of infantry into action.

A flight of British Westland Wasps are deployed by the Navy for off-shore transport and operation. It has also been claimed that the SAAF possesses German BO 105's³⁵ and US/Italian Agusta Bell helicopters³⁶ (now known to be in operation in Rhodesia³⁷), but this has not been confirmed.

The Cactus surface-to-air missile, designed by the National Institute of Defence Research in the 1960's (see above) and manufactured and marketed internationally by France as the Crotale, has become the cornerstone weapon of the SAAF in *Air Defence*, supported by the British Tigercat missile (delivered to South Africa and thence to Rhodesia through Jordan in 1974)³⁸ together with Swiss anti-aircraft guns.³⁹ Every airfield of strategic importance is now apparently well-equipped and manned by an air defence unit which is slotted into the SADF's sophisticated radar system that monitors the air space of Southern Africa as a whole.⁴⁰

Table V
SAAF DEPLOYMENT

Unit	Aircraft	Base	Role
1 Sqn	Mirage F1AZ	Waterkloof	Attack
2 Sqn	Mirage 111CZ/ Mirage 111RZ	Waterkloof	Intercept/Recce
3 Sqn	Mirage F1CZ	Waterkloof	Intercept
4 Sqn	Impala 11	Waterkloof	Attack
5 Sqn	Impala 11	Durban	Attack
6 Sqn	Impala 11	Port Elizabeth	Attack
7 Sqn	Impala 11	Ysterplaat	Attack
8 Sqn	Impala 11	Bloemspruit	Attack
11 Sqn	Cessna 185	Potchefstroom	Liaison
12 Sqn	Canberra	Waterkloof	Bombing
15 Sqn	Super Frelon	Bloemspruit/ Swartkop	Transport
16 Sqn	Alouette	Bloemspruit/ Durban	Liaison
17 Sqn	Alouette	Port Elizabeth/ Swartkop	Liaison
19 Sqn	Puma	Swartkop/Durban	Transport
21 Sqn	Viscount/HS125/ Merlin	Swartkop	VIP transport
22 Flt	Westland Wasp	Ysterplaat	Anti-submarine
24 Sqn	Buccaneer	Waterkloof	Attack
25 Sqn	C-47	Ysterplaat	Transport
27 Sqn	P1665 Albatross	Ysterplaat	Maritime Patrol
28 Sqn	C130/C160	Waterkloof	Transport
35 Sqn	Shackleton	Cape Town	Maritime Patrol
41 Sqn	Kudu/Bosbok	Swartkop/ Potchefstroom	Liaison
42 Sqn	Bosbok	Potchefstroom	Liaison
43 Sqn	Cessna 185	Potchefstroom	Liaison
44 Sqn	DC-4/C-47	Swartkop	Transport
85 Advanced Flying School	Mirage/Sabre	Pietersburg	Training
86 AFS	C-47	Bloemspruit	Training
87 AFS	Alouette	Ysterplaat	Training

Source: *Air Forces of the World* (Salamander; London, 1979)

Table VI
ESTIMATED SAAF ARMS INVENTORY

Type	Role	No.	Manufacturer	Remarks
<i>Landward air defence/attack</i>				
Mirage F.1AZ	ground attack fighter	60+	Fr./SA	32 delivered in parts from France; rest manufactured in SA; planned requirement 100+; equipped with EMD Aida II fire control system and laser range finder; a priority for Atlas.
Mirage F.1CZ III CZ	interceptor	25 + 16	Fr./SA Fr./SA	16 F.1CZ delivered '74/5 and more being manufactured in SA. Armed with R530 and R.550. Magic air-to-air missiles; IICZ now used as trainers.
Mirage III BZ, DZ, D2Z	two-seater trainer	19	Fr.	3 BZ delivered early '60's; 3 DZ del. '65/6; 13 D2Z del. '72.
Mirage III RZ and R2Z	tactical reconnaissance	10 +	Fr.	4 RZ and 4R2Z del. from France; 16 R2Z to be manufactured in SA.
Mirage III EZ	ground attack fighter bomber	38	Fr./SA	20 del. '65/6; 18 manufactured in SA; armed with Nord AS-20/30 air-to-surface missiles. now used as trainers at 85 AFS.
CL-13 B Sabre Mk6	fighter	12	Canada	del. '62.
BAC Canberra	strike-reconnaissance	9	UK	16 del. from Italy '67; 10 del. in parts '67; 40 del. in parts '68; 150 manufactured in SA '67-'73.
Impala MB	two-seater basic	216	Italy/SA	7 del. '74/5; 15 del. in parts '75; 50 manufactured in SA '76; 50+ on order for completion '78.
326M Mk1	trainer			
Impala MB	ground attack	122 +	Italy/SA	
326K Mk2				
<i>Maritime Command</i>				
Buccaneer S Mk50	maritime strike-reconnaissance	7	UK	del. '65.
HS Shackleton MR Mk3	maritime patrol	7	UK	del. '57; recently resparred; equipment updated.
P.166 S Albatross	coastal patrol and light transport	18	Italy	9 del. from Italy '69; 9 del. '73/4.

<i>Transport</i>				
Lockheed C-130B Hercules	heavy transport	7	US	del. from US '63.
Lockheed L-100	heavy transport	15	US	civilian equivalent of C-130B; del. from US for "civilian purposes"; del. from France '69/70.
Transall C-160	heavy transport	9	Fr./FRG	del. from US '50's.
Douglas C-47	medium transport	30	US	del. from UK early '70's.
Dakota	light transport	4	UK	del. from US '70's
HS 125	light transport	7	US	
Swearingen				
Merlin IVA				
<i>Utility/Liaison - Light Aircraft Command</i>				
Cessna CE-185	light transport and reconnaissance	16	US	del. from US '60's.
Cessna 185 Skywagon	light transport and reconnaissance	12	US	del. from US '70's.
AM.3CM Bosbok	forward air control; tactical reconnaissance	40	Italy/SA	del. from Italy and manufactured in SA '74/5.
Atlas C4M Kudu	light transport casualty evacuation forward air control tactical reconnaissance light transport casualty evacuation	40 +	SA	designed and manufactured in SA based on Bosbok.
<i>Helicopters</i>				
Alouette II and III (SE-313 and SE-316)	light air support	110 +	Fr.	7 II's del. from France '62; 54 III's del. '65/6; 16 III's del. '68; later orders unconfirmed.
SA-330 Puma	air support light transport	40 +	Fr.	20 del. '70/1; later orders unconfirmed.
SA-321L Super Frelon	medium transport	15 +	Fr.	16 del. '70/1; later orders unconfirmed.

Westland Wasp	light maritime support	12	UK	del. from UK '66-'74.
SA-341 Gazelle	light support	2	Fr.	?
BO 105	light support	?	FRG	?

Also:

30 HS Vampire trainers; 74 Rockwell; T-6 Harvard trainers; 1 BAC Viscount transport; 5 Douglas DC-4 transport.

There have been allegations that the SAAF also has the following:

40 Lockheed F-140 G Starfighter; 50 F-51D Cavalier; 25 Agusta Bell 205A Iroquois; 12 Lockheed P-2 Neptune; Pucara FMA 1A.58.

Sources: DMS *Market Intelligence Report* (US, 1976); *Air International* (UK, May 1976); IISS, *Military Balance* (UK, annual); Sean Gervasi "The Breakdown of the Arms Embargo against SA" (Congress testimony, US, 1977); Michael Klare, "How the US equips South Africa's military", *Baltimore Sun* (US, 19.2.78); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute *Arms Register* (Sweden, annual).

THE SA NAVY

The British Navy maintained the only naval force in South Africa from the 18th century until 1946 when the South African Navy was formed, equipped with British vessels. In 1955 the regime entered into the Simonstown Agreement with Britain, allowing for a permanent British military contingent in Cape Town, Royal Naval access to all South African ports and close collaboration in naval exercises.

South African naval strength and choice of weapon systems over the years gives a clear illustration of its marine strategy in the context of its perceived domestic and international role. There are three identifiable periods of planning and strategy through which the SA Navy has passed since its formation in 1946.

In the first twenty years of its existence, operating in close collaboration with the Royal Navy, the SA Navy developed, in effect, as a wing of the British force. The bulk of its present fleet was acquired during this period and consists of 2 destroyers (launched in 1943, transferred to South Africa in the early 1950's and modernised in the 1960's), 7 frigates (4 launched during World War II and the other 3, including the flagship *President Steyn*, launched in the early 1960's), 10 minesweepers (transferred to South Africa in the late 1950's) and 5 light FORI Class vessels (also purchased in the late 1950's).⁴¹

In the late 1960's and early 1970's the SADF turned to France in its attempt to build a fleet that would be capable of rendering significant support to a NATO force in the southern oceans. Three *Daphne* Class submarines were delivered in 1970⁴² and orders were placed in France for four A69 frigates and three *Agosta* Class submarines. Two of the frigates were almost ready for delivery in December 1977 when the mandatory arms embargo forced the cancellation of all these orders.⁴³ There are also reports of an SADF order placed in Portugal for six *Corvettes* which apparently never materialised.⁴⁴

In anticipation of the arms embargo the regime announced plans for a domestic naval industry in 1975, beginning with the construction of high-speed patrol boats.⁴⁵ Patterned on the Israeli *Reshef* patrol boat, armed with Israeli *Gabriel* anti-ship missiles and fitted out with Italian assistance,⁴⁶ it is believed that six of these craft have already been built and that more are under construction in Durban.⁴⁷ Ideal for the defence of the South African coastline, the deployment of these vessels at the head of the fleet gives an indication of the shift in defence focus from the sea lanes of the Indian and Atlantic oceans to the coastal waters of South Africa. A further development along these lines was announced in April 1979 with the establishment of a Marine Corps, equipped with locally built light patrol craft, for the protection of harbours.⁴⁸

The "Cape Sea Route" has long featured in South African military and strategic thinking particularly in respect of relations with the West. This thinking has been reciprocated: in November 1972 for example, a meeting of the NATO Assembly recommended that SACLANT (NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic) be given "authority to plan for the protection

of NATO Europe's vital shipping lines in the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic including surveillance and communications".⁴⁹ In December 1974 it was reported that "NATO Defence Ministers are maintaining an agreed cloak of secrecy but it has been made clear privately that the defence of the Cape sea-route is "well covered" in a contingency plan, and that South Africa would receive naval assistance if the oil route was threatened".⁵⁰

It appears to be clear that NATO was relying on British/South African naval collaboration to maintain NATO influence in the area. It was within this framework that the SADF was able to expand its fleet by ordering submarines and frigates from Europe. At the same time the South African Navy's major base at Simonstown was rebuilt to double its capacity⁵¹ and the huge underground communications complex at Silvermine near Cape Town was constructed.

Opened in 1973, Silvermine is one of the most modern surveillance and communications centres in the world. Sophisticated equipment monitors all sea and air traffic in the Indian and South Atlantic oceans – a global area stretching from North Africa to the South Pole and South America to the Bay of Bengal. This facility, enabling a constant check to be kept on every foreign ship off the coasts of Africa, was clearly established in NATO's interest. The necessary equipment was supplied to South Africa by Britain, the United States, France, West Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, with all parts classified in the NATO coding system⁵². The official opening of Silvermine in March 1973 was attended by representatives of four foreign navies – those of Britain, France, Iran and Portugal⁵³. Later in the year it was revealed that permanent communications links were maintained with the Royal Navy at Simonstown and in London, with the US Navy in Puerto Rico, with the French Navy at Dakar and Madagascar, with the Argentinian Navy in Buenos Aires and with the Portuguese Navy, then in Luanda and Lourenço Marques. Potential links also existed with the Australian Navy.⁵⁴

The unofficial alliance between NATO and the SADF has been reluctantly curtailed in the years since 1973. The termination of the Simonstown Agreement by the British Labour government in 1975 was not welcomed by NATO's military commanders,⁵⁵ and in October 1975 SACLANT publicly re-affirmed its stated position that NATO had a duty to assure the safe delivery of Western oil supplies, and that contingency plans had been established for the defence of the Cape route⁵⁶. While open military collaboration is ruled out for political reasons, it is clear from the tone of NATO documents that it hoped to maintain a sphere of influence in the Southern African area.

The SA Navy's expansion plans were effectively halted by the mandatory UN embargo of December 1977, and as a result a shift has been apparent in SADF pronouncements. The SA Navy Chief, Vice Adm. J. C. Walters, stated in April 1978 that the SADF would no longer look to its "voluntary duty to care for the security of the Cape route" and would in future "concentrate on our primary task of defending our own coast and harbours and patrolling our traditional fishing waters".⁵⁷

This view may also reflect internal SADF tensions; it is believed that over the past decade influential commanders in the SADF's landward forces have

expressed their doubts as to the validity of wasting energy and resources on a large naval fleet. This was particularly the case when a significant proportion of the defence budget was allocated to the ill-fated French orders. While it appears that this school of thought has won the day, the potential for the SADF to once again woo the Western powers to commit forces in Southern Africa and the southern oceans at some future date can by no means be ruled out.

More important perhaps are the uses to which naval equipment is likely to be put in the immediate future. It is believed that Silvermine, for example, is the HQ for electronic battlefield surveillance stretching northwards beyond South Africa's borders. A British company, Marconi, sold a Tropospheric Scatter System to the SADF in 1976 to provide a more direct communications link between Northern Namibia and Silvermine. Through this system, guerilla movements are believed to be detected by electronic sensors monitored in the "brain centre" in Cape Town and orders for counter-action relayed back to the operational HQ's in the North.⁵⁸

The new emphasis on the SA Navy patrolling the South African coast also seems to reflect contingency plans to intercept guerilla forces should these attempt to enter South Africa by boat. Finally, South African strategists may have in mind a future economic embargo on trade. In such a situation the SA Navy could have a role to play, protecting maritime traffic with countries or shipping lines which ignored the embargo.

5 CONSCRIPTION AND RECRUITMENT

The strength of each component part of the SADF and in particular the rapid expansion of conscripted manpower in the past few years is one of the best indicators of the current political situation in Southern Africa. One of the South African government's major problems is the creation of a defence force large enough to meet its operational commitments. In addition to the problems caused by the need to raise ever-increasing amounts of money for defence purposes and by the partial effect of international isolation on weapons procurement, the SADF is faced with the need to expand its manpower resources.

In the Second World War over 110,000 black South Africans served with the Allied Forces in Egypt, East Africa, Italy and the Middle East.¹ When the present government came to power in 1948 the military establishment was reorganised and defence became the sole responsibility of white males. In 1957 a new Defence Act was passed through Parliament which, notwithstanding numerous amendments, remains the basis of all defence planning to this day. Under this Act the guidelines for conscription and recruitment have been laid out and all white male South African citizens are liable for service between the ages of 18 and 65.

The basic pattern of service has remained unchanged in the last two decades. Conscripts are liable to serve an initial period of training, national service, followed by part-time service for a number of years in the Citizen Force (CF) or Commandos and are then placed on the National Reserve, liable to call-up in an emergency up to the age of 65. What have changed on numerous occasions, giving an indication of the SADF's operational requirements, are the periods of service.

In 1967 compulsory conscription was introduced, replacing a ballot system of draft, and by 1972 the initial period of national service had been increased from 9 to 12 months, followed by 19 days service annually for five years in the CF. At the end of 1975, to meet operational requirements in Namibia and Angola, members of the CF were called up for three-month tours of duty which despite numerous promises to the contrary, have been continued ever since.² In 1977, in an attempt, according to the SADF, to stop these three-month CF call-ups, national service was increased to 24 months with standard "peace-time" CF commitments increased to 30 days annually for the following eight years. However the three month call-ups have continued and there are now rumours about the increase of national service to 36 months. This steady increase of service commitments is one of the most concrete indications of the military build-up that has been taking place in South Africa over the last decade.

There are approximately one million white males between the ages of 18 and 45 in South Africa today.³ It is this small section of the population that has carried the responsibility, not only for manning the SADF, but also for holding almost all key skilled and managerial positions within the economy.



Ever-increasing service requirements are not only draining the economy of this sector, but are also having a serious effect on the training of young whites for skilled jobs. In 1978 an executive of the white engineering union warned the SADF that the 24-month national service call-up would create a critical shortage of trained artisans.⁴ It is becoming increasingly clear that in the escalating conflict in Southern Africa, the demands of the SADF for manpower will place increasing strains on the white population, as has happened in Rhodesia.

The manpower figures for the SADF illustrate how the defence of apartheid is requiring larger and larger numbers. If all forms of service from PF through national service to CF and commandos are taken together, some 480,000 persons are in a state of present or potential mobilisation (see Table VII). This represents one out of every five white South African males, and one out of every two males between 18 and 45.

The expansion of the SADF has been relatively rapid: universal white male conscription was only introduced in 1967 and two-year national service in 1977. The influx of young men has strained the officer and training resources of the SADF at the same time as operational needs have also increased. The difficulties caused by this have frequently been pointed out; Prime Minister Botha speaking in the 1979 Defence Appropriation Bill debate in April 1979, stated that "there is a chronic shortage of this leadership element in the country both at the highest level as well as the intermediate level".⁵

Another problem relates to the shortage of skilled technicians, which is felt particularly in the SAAF since aircraft mechanics and other trained personnel can command higher wages and easier conditions working for commercial airlines than in the SADF. Other skilled personnel, vital to the maintenance of sophisticated weapons systems, are drawn towards more attractive prospects in private industry. The SADF has admitted that it faces major problems in this regard yet Prime Minister Botha refuses to allow the SADF to compete with the private sector by significantly raising the salaries of skilled personnel.⁶

The 1977 Defence White Paper recognised the need to expand the Permanent Force in order to provide the officers and NCO's for training purposes and technical staff. A major recruiting programme, aimed at inducing national servicemen to join the regular force on completion of their conscripted period, has been under way since 1975. According to the 1979 White Paper, the PF was expanded by 30% in 1978 although "the expansion during the past two years would have been greater had so many trained members not left the service . . . the loss represents an enormous brain drain."⁷

To increase the ranks of the SADF even further, in 1978 the government passed legislation obliging all white male immigrants under the age of 25 to take out South African citizenship after two years' residence, thus rendering them liable for military service⁸. This marks an alteration in policy, which previously excluded aliens from the SADF, presumably on the grounds that their loyalty could not be assured. The SADF has also supplemented its forces by employing soldiers who had previously served with the Portuguese

armed forces in Angola and Mozambique.⁹ While the SADF officially deplores mercenaries and does not recruit any on that basis but integrates foreigners within the SADF structures, the immigrant recruitment programme allows any foreigner to volunteer for service, particularly in the elite units such as the Reconnaissance Commando, which is known to have British and American citizens in its ranks.¹⁰

To encourage military recruitment, as well as to inculcate a sense of military duty, all white males between the ages of 12 and 17 are liable to undergo cadet training while at school. An estimated 300,000 schoolboys, and a growing number of girls, are involved in this crucial programme.¹¹ Cadets are also encouraged to attend military camps during their holidays where they receive fairly advanced military training. This system is clearly aimed at assimilating children into the military system so that the period of training during national service can be covered more quickly and effectively. Along with "Youth Preparedness" courses in the classroom, the cadet system plays an important role in the process of conditioning and indoctrinating young people in their formative years. Plans announced by Mr. P. W. Botha in 1978 to introduce a similar programme for "Coloured" schools have been met by strong opposition from the "Coloured" Labour Party and the association of over 9,000 teachers.¹² It appears, however, that the government is intending to go ahead with these plans, despite their rejection by the affected community.

White women are also playing an increasingly more important role in the SADF. By 1974, 39 women had been commissioned in the Army,¹³ while the Navy accepted its first woman officer in 1972¹⁴ and the Air Force in 1974.¹⁵ By 1977 over 6,000 women had volunteered for service in the Commandos¹⁶ and this figure is believed to have at least doubled since then. Approximately 1,000 women are now being trained in the PF and CF (through the Army Women's College) each year¹⁷. An all-woman Commando squadron became operational in the Air Force in 1977.¹⁸ Women in the SADF are no longer relegated merely to the traditional "feminine" roles of nursing and clerical assistance. They are to be found in a number of operational mustering, from Intelligence to the Signal Corps. Despite the fact that all recruits are given extensive musketry training, women are not used in combat. The active role of women in various Commando units means, however, that they may be brought into combat in the rural areas of the Transvaal in the near future.

The most significant element in the expansion of SADF manpower in the past decade, however, has been the recruitment of black South Africans into military employment – a step which is of political as well as military importance. After their demobilisation at the end of World War II, no blacks were allowed to serve in the SADF, and as late as 1970, Defence Minister Botha categorically stated that blacks would never be employed in the SADF, adding that "if the Bantu wanted to build up a defence force, he should do so in his own eventually independent homeland."¹⁹ By 1972, however, a few blacks were serving in combat alongside whites in the Caprivi Strip and Rhodesia.²⁰ Combat training for "Coloureds" was initiated in 1973²¹ and in 1974 the first African Permanent Force unit was

formed.²² 1974 also saw the establishment of the first black Namibian unit which is now one of five black Namibian battalions that are operationally deployed alongside white SADF units.²³ In 1975 the Transkeian Defence Force was formed in an attempt to give credibility to the declaration of "independence"²⁴, in 1977 the BophuthaTswana National Guard was established²⁵ and in 1979 the Venda National Guard came into operation²⁶. It is realistic to expect that the other Bantustans, particularly the strategically situated Lebowa, Gazankulu and KwaZulu, will be "encouraged" to establish their own forces as rapidly as possible to bolster border defences.

Within a matter of five years, the regime not only changed its attitude on the role of blacks within the SADF, but did so with remarkable speed. It is estimated that between 1974 and 1979 a total of approximately 12,000 black troops were trained and deployed, most of them on a permanent basis. This figure includes estimates of 5,000 Namibians, 1,000 in the Transkeian Defence Force, 1,000 in the BophuthaTswana National Guard, 600 Africans in the SADF, 4,000 Coloureds and 750 Indians. This is now being taken a step further, according to SADF plans, with the introduction of compulsory conscription for Coloureds and Indians by 1982 which will add at least 20,000 troops to the annual national service intake.²⁷

At present Indians can volunteer for a special naval unit in Durban which is responsible for harbour defence and the manning of one mine sweeper.²⁸ Approximately 150 recruits are accepted each year.²⁹

The Coloured component of the SADF is more advanced and consists of an operational infantry battalion, a service battalion and a junior leader training school all based near Cape Town. Coloureds have also been recruited in large numbers into the Navy, mainly as deck hands and dock workers. While service is voluntary it is believed that unemployed Coloured youths are induced by threats to volunteer, in what amounts to an economic draft.³⁰

With rising unemployment and poor job prospects, more young blacks may be forced for financial reasons to join the SADF, although in other circumstances it is unlikely that many would volunteer to defend white South Africa and all it stands for. This is particularly true in the Bantustans, where there are few other job opportunities. Their position is however ambivalent and the SADF has not launched into the recruitment of black troops without taking precautions to ensure their "loyalty". Black volunteers are screened by psychologists, ethnologists and senior SADF personnel to check their record and "personality" before being recruited and training programmes devote a large portion of time to indoctrination.³¹

The future role of Bantustan military forces is of particular importance to the SADF's strategy. The rapid expansion of the BophuthaTswana National Guard appears to be an indication of steps that the SADF will take in developing Bantustan forces, particularly those strategically situated on the borders surrounding the white industrial areas of the Transvaal and Natal. The BophuthaTswana National Guard has been established under the wing of the SADF's North Western (NW) Command³² and, despite the veneer of "independence", there appears to be no indication, as in the case of the

Table VII
ESTIMATED SADF MANPOWER 1960-1979

	1960	1967	1974	1977	1979
PF	11,500 ¹	13,000 ¹	21,500 ¹	28,000	40,000 ²
NSM	10,000 ³	23,000 ³	26,000 ⁴	27,000	60,000 ⁵
CF	2,000 ⁶	30,000	120,000	180,000 ⁷	230,000
Commandos	48,500 ⁸	75,000	90,000	120,000	150,000 ⁹
Civilians ¹⁰	6,000	8,000	11,500 ¹¹	12,500	14,000
Total	78,000	154,000	269,000	367,500	494,000
Standing Op. Force ¹²	11,500 ¹³	42,000 ¹³	47,500 ¹³	105,000 ¹⁴	180,000 ¹⁵

Few official figures are available on SADF strengths (cf. SA Police). This table is an attempt to put together an estimation of the situation.

Sources and Notes:

1. Revenue A/C Estimates 1960, 1967 and 1974.
2. PF strength increased by 30% in 1978-1979 WP.
3. *Debates*, 6.5.76.
4. *Debates*, 18.2.76.
5. National Service was doubled to two years in 1977.
6. 1964 WP on Defence.
7. According 1977 WP the CF comprised 54.9% of the SADF (excluding NSM that had not completed training).
8. *Military and Police Forces in the RSA* (UN 1967)
9. In 1974 249 Commando units were in existence (*Debates*, 10.9.74) and since then the strengths of these units have been expanded, along with the formation of many more, particularly Industrial Commandos.
10. This includes administrative staff and labourers.
11. Revenue A/C Estimates 1974/5.
12. This is an estimate of the number of troops under arms at any one time.
13. Until the end of 1975 operational strength was drawn from the PF and NSM alone.
14. This figure consists of: PF & NSM = 55,000; Approx. 1/4 of CF (given that all CF units were required to serve 3 months each year) = 40,000; and approx. 10,000 Commandos (units that volunteer for op. duty).
15. PF & NSM = 100,000; CF 50,000; Commandos 30,000.

Transkei (which is of relatively minimal strategic importance) of the SADF relinquishing its direct and tight control of this force. There are plans in the pipeline in both BophuthaTswana³³ and the Transkei³⁴ for the implementation of a national service system that will drastically increase the number of black troops in these areas.

Apart from aiding manpower resources, the introduction of black troops has developed into an integral part of the government's political strategy. The SADF is obviously keen, by deploying blacks in the front line, to create a black vs. black military conflict to confuse both the population of South Africa and the international community as to the nature of the war. Bantustan forces are also being established to help maintain the positions of their so-called leaders. For instance, of the first seven officers commissioned in the Transkei, three were sons of tribal chiefs and one was the son of George Matanzima, now Prime Minister.³⁵ Most ominous, however, is the lesson that the SADF must have learned from the effective use in Rhodesia of black members of the Selous Scouts, whose role in committing atrocities in Rhodesia has been referred to above.

6 PARA-MILITARY FORCES – THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE

In a statement in January 1979, Mr. P. W. Botha indicated that the SADF, due to operational commitments in the border areas and in Namibia, could not commit itself to the day-to-day monitoring and building of a defence infrastructure within the urban areas of South Africa.¹ The SADF has in fact been able to relieve itself of this responsibility owing to the existence of an efficient para-military police force that has already proved its brutal effectiveness.

In the first two decades following World War II, the South African Police (SAP) was the apartheid state's major security force and more than doubled its authorised strength between 1945 and 1960. In 1960 SAP operational strength ($\pm 26,000$) was more than double that of the SADF ($\pm 11,500$)². However, by 1977 the SADF's total potential strength ($\pm 367,500$) was more than five times greater than that of the SAP ($\pm 72,000$). These figures give a clear indication of the major shift that has taken place in the past two decades.³

Table VIII

SA POLICE MANPOWER

a) Authorised Police Establishment 1930 –78

	<i>SAP</i>
1930	10,593
1940	11,185
1950	19,146
1960	28,007
1970	50,831
1978	72,500 (est.)

Source: SAP Annual Reports

b) Total SAP strength 1972 –1977

	<i>1972</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1977</i>
Regulars	32,281	32,515	33,082	35,000 (est)
Police Reserve	—	6,059	11,623	15,040
Reserve Police	19,330	20,428	20,236	22,022
Total	51,611	59,002	64,941	72,062 (est)

Source: SAP Annual Reports

Until 1967, when South Africa began committing companies of police trained in counter-insurgency to Northern Namibia (to fight SWAPO) and Rhodesia (where troops were sent to patrol the Zambian border in response to a joint ANC (SA)/ZAPU guerilla initiative), it is clear that the security chiefs were under the impression that the SAP, if expanded to approximately double its strength, would be able to contain the threat facing the apartheid state, both politically and militarily. In deploying the SAP in these situations the Nationalist government was also anxious to portray the conflict in Southern Africa as one of police vs. criminals rather than army vs. guerillas. The introduction of universal conscription for white males in 1967 and the subsequent massive build-up of SADF establishment, however, resulted from the realisation that, in order to survive, it was necessary to have a military force far greater than that capable of being established within the framework of the SAP. This was a conclusion reinforced by the SAP's excursions outside South Africa, when the need for increased manpower became apparent. Since 1967, SADF operational establishment has grown by over 400% (see Chapter 5).

Despite the massive expansion of the SADF in the last decade, the SAP has also grown. In 1960 the force consisted of 12,850 white and 13,321 black regulars. By 1977 it had increased to approximately 19,000 whites and 15,820 blacks, while in the area of supplementary forces an even greater increase in strength had been seen.

In 1961 the Minister of Justice announced the establishment of a *Reserve Police* force – a citizen force to assist voluntarily in performing ordinary police duties when regular members were required for more urgent tasks.⁴ The Reserve Police, members of which are attached to almost every police station in South Africa, consists of four distinct groups; Group A are regarded as full-time, paid police in times of emergency to carry out normal police duties; Group B are required to perform two hours duty a day in patrolling their own residential areas during emergencies; Group C consists of employees responsible for the security of important installations and services at their place of work and Group D are rural-based reservists who are required to act as a civilian riot force carrying out police duties in the initial stages of an emergency until regular police arrive in sufficient strength. All members of the Reserve Police are volunteers, most of whom have had previous military or police experience and are called out regularly for training, especially in riot control techniques.

In January 1973 the *Police Reserve* (not to be confused with the Reserve Police) was established.⁵ This force, consisting solely of ex-members of the SAP, is divided into two groups; the Active Group consists of ex-members who served as regulars for less than five years and who may be ordered to serve 30 days each year for five years after their resignation from the SAP; the Inactive Group consists of other ex-members who may be ordered to serve in the force for unlimited periods in times of emergency (this regulation also covers Active members of the Reserve).

Despite the additional strength that these two Reserves have given to the SAP, the force still suffered manpower shortages, partly because of

TABLE IX
RESERVE POLICE FORCE

a) Reserve Police: by group 1967 and 1971

	1967	1971
Group A	5,260	6,088
Group B	8,277	10,271
Group C	2,969	2,645
Group D	882	654
Total	17,388	19,658

b) Reserve Police: by race 1972–1978

	1972	1975	1978
Whites	15,806	16,147	18,333
Blacks	2,547	3,556	3,497
Total	18,353	19,703	21,820

Source: SAP Annual Reports. Breakdown figures for Groups A–D are not available after 1971.

Table X
POLICE RESERVE FORCE 1974–1978

	1974	1975	1977	1978
Active	886	2,171	3,318	3,639
Inactive	5,173	9,452	11,722	11,395
Total	6,059	11,623	15,040	15,034

Source: SAP Annual Reports

unattractive pay and conditions but also because of the deployment in Namibia and Rhodesia. Thus in 1975 (the year the SAP were officially withdrawn from Rhodesia) the first batch of 500 conscripts were diverted from the SADF to undertake two years' national service in the SAP.⁶ This system has continued, with an estimated 1,000 conscripts now being drafted into the SAP each year.

While blacks have always constituted a significant proportion of the SAP, they have occupied only junior ranks and, until recently, served without fire-arms. Although it is something of a false distinction, this paper does not cover the "normal" law-and-order functions of the SAP, nor the influx control and pass law functions of the township or municipal police, and in this connection it is significant that the decision to arm black police is both recent and related to guerilla activity. As late as 1969, the press reported that "a 1,000 strong para-military all-African police force – but without a gun between them – which will go into action soon with a selected emergency riot squad and 2-way radio vehicles, is being trained in Soweto to combat crime."⁷ The first comprehensive counter-insurgency and riot training programme for blacks was in fact begun at the beginning of 1972. The first batch of 294 trainees subsequently became the first blacks to fight alongside white troops in SAP operations in Rhodesia and Namibia during 1972.⁸ The first indication of blacks being armed for "normal" police duties inside South Africa came in a report that during 1974/5 988 blacks had received basic training in handling firearms (not including the 246 who were trained for "anti-terrorist activities" in the same year).⁹ Between 1967 and 1974 the SAP was the major South African force used in counter-insurgency operations in Rhodesia and Namibia. A report at the time stated that "the argument as to whether they are police or army is quite academic. In Rhodesia at least they have exactly the same function as the Rhodesian Army".¹⁰ SAP units officially withdrew from Rhodesia in 1975 and by 1973 the SADF had taken over control of Northern Namibia, though SAP units are still active there today in a limited role. With the prime responsibility for border operations off its shoulders, the SAP was then able to return to its traditional role inside South Africa.

According to a Deputy Commissioner of the SAP, Maj. Gen. Loxton, border duties had by 1974 imposed a considerable strain on the police "law enforcement section".¹¹ Minister of Police, Mr. J. T. Kruger, announced in October 1974 that a voluntary police corps was to be formed to take over police responsibilities for border duties, serving in the operational areas on an almost permanent basis.¹² This relieved the necessity of large numbers of police being called out of their normal duties for border service. Mr. Kruger also stated in parliament in 1977 that "while the SAP served in Rhodesia, the regional riot unit practically ceased to exist. When the police were withdrawn from Rhodesia these units had to be built up again from scratch."¹³

Priority planning in the SAP during 1974 and 1975 was aimed at the establishment of efficient counter-insurgency and riot control forces. While there is some validity in the argument that the SAP was not fully prepared for the events following 16 June 1976, by that time the SAP had established

18 specially trained riot squads throughout South Africa¹⁴ "fully equipped with vehicles, general equipment, arms and ammunition and technical requirements"¹⁵ and all members of the force, including reserves, had received at least basic riot training. The regular SAP establishment in 1975 was 33,082 but the overall size of the force (including reserves) which could be mobilised is indicated in Table VIII, as a total of 65,000 men. This strength was spread over the country, capable of operating on a number of levels in containing the uprising. The SADF was also involved after 16 June, but was used primarily to defend strategic points and white residential and business areas rather than in an active role or in direct battle in townships. While the SAP was obviously under considerable pressure in controlling the demonstrations, the decision not to actively involve the SADF in retaliation can only be interpreted in the light of the attempt to portray the events of 1976 as a disturbance that was being dealt with by the police rather than a major confrontation between the army and the black population. The deployment of forces during this period was nevertheless considerable as shown in Table XI.

Table XI

SAP/SADF DEPLOYMENT FOR "INTERNAL SECURITY" 1975–6

<i>Target</i>	<i>Force</i>
Black townships and other "trouble spots"	SAP Regulars Police Reserves Reserve Police Group A SA Army CF units (on standby) SAAF squadrons (on standby)
White residential areas	Reserve Police Group B Commandos Civil Defence units
Industrial areas	Reserve Police Group C Industrial Commandos
Rural areas	Reserve Police Group D Commandos

A cursory glance at photographs and film footage of the apartheid forces in action in Soweto and other South African townships during 1976 gives the impression that the troops are in fact soldiers. This similarity is a convincing example of the para-military nature of the SAP. In fact a realistic definition of the SAP in its present form is that it is a wing of the SADF with additional training in crime prevention.

7 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR

Within the concept of a "total war" situation as perceived by the South African government, the SADF has recognised that its strategy cannot be based on military might alone and that the application of methods of psychological warfare is crucial to the defence of apartheid.

Psychological warfare has been used in most conflict situations primarily as a means of directly under-mining enemy forces, although maintaining domestic morale is also an important contribution to the war effort. By contrast, the SADF's psychological war machine is aimed, aggressively, not so much at people or nations beyond its borders but at the population within, which it claims to be defending.

The SADF appears to have pinpointed three major areas of psychological action: the mounting of a potent, patriotic war attitude amongst the white population; the maintenance of the loyalty of all troops, black and white, within the SADF; and the winning of the "hearts and minds" of the black population in rural areas. The following illustrations give an insight into the operation of what has become an indispensable cog within the military machine.

WAR MENTALITY

The superficial trappings of war are evident in most South African towns today. Military parades take place with increasing regularity and include a growing number of cadet detachments.¹ Radio stations devote a good deal of time to request programmes for soldiers in service and the TV station covers military propaganda extensively.² When a local detachment of "troopies" comes back after a spell in the operational area it is not uncommon for the whole town to turn out to welcome them.³ Civilian light arms sales are booming to meet the needs of over 750,000 white South Africans who have licences to carry arms.

Children are also drawn into the military state of mind: in 1978 sales of war games in toy shops increased by 500% over the previous year.⁴ Advertisers have caught the atmosphere, a light truck being advertised as a little tank, a lawnmower to fight "the battle of the lawn" and a video camera under the banner of "Shoot the workers. It's the only way they'll learn"⁵. A magazine is advertised in the following terms: "With the battlecry of 'Saddle up, the enemy is coming' and the motto 'Unity is Strength' our country's sons have answered the call. Read in SA Man, the vital magazine for men, how these two slogans became our prescription for national survival."⁶

This spreading military mentality is fostered by the State's avowed aim of inculcating allegiance to apartheid in South Africa among young white people through the educational system. The white school system, entitled "National Education", as distinct from "Coloured", "Indian" and "Black (formerly Bantu) Education", contains elements of indoctrination based on concepts of "Christian National Education" worked out in the 1940's by

Afrikaner ideologues⁷. These were re-affirmed during the 1978 debate on the National Education Vote, when a senior Nationalist MP stated in a speech on the patriotism of school children that "we must indoctrinate them to become true father-landers with a Christian loyalty to their people and their country". The Minister of National Education endorsed this view, adding that every teacher "must be trained in a Christian National fashion", that "the correct attitude of patriotism had to be taught to children" and that, "enshrined in the law", was the principle that "the history, language, traditions and national symbols of the country should be held in esteem and promoted."⁸ This history, tradition and symbolism belongs unambiguously to the white population only, and is heavily biased towards the Afrikaner nationalism of the government. Professor Nic Wiehahn, adviser to the Minister of Labour, described the purpose of such patriotism in April 1978 when he wrote "To motivate them, young white people need an inspiring cause, and this could lie in a fight for survival and the preservation of their own identity."⁹

The process of conditioning is aided by the media in all its forms. On the one hand, the strict censorship laws forbid even the outspoken liberal press to voice alternative ideas on sensitive issues, particularly the question of military service. On the other hand, the media is instrumental in bombarding its audiences with the government's ideas on "communism", "terrorism", "swartgevaar" (black danger) and "patriotism". A fairly typical photo-comic (a popular form of literature amongst the youth) was recently published which depicts a muscular blond hero, Mark the Victor, saving two white children from "terrorists" – who are shown as unarmed blacks in ordinary work clothes.¹⁰

In 1978 two new organisations were established to aid and maintain this growing war psychosis. In March the formation of a "National Institute for Survival" was announced by the SADF, aimed at training both civilians and soldiers in the "art of survival".¹¹ In April the "South Africa First" campaign was launched. According to its chairman, it was established "because there is a definite need for a non-political organisation to ward off psychological attacks."¹² Although little activity has been reported from either of these organisations, their formation is indicative of perceived needs.

By and large the process of militarisation is supported by the white-dominated churches. The Afrikaans churches openly rally people to support the SADF in what they see as a religious war against communism. The English churches, with the exception of a number of outspoken clergy, give tacit endorsement to governmental policy. South Africa has a large church-going population and thus the role of the church is relatively significant. The issue of conscientious objection to military service – a civil right not recognised in South Africa – has exercised some sections of the church, as has the question of military chaplains.¹³

In 1974 the South African Council of Churches passed a resolution recognising the right of church members to consider becoming conscientious objectors. The government responded to this by increasing the penalties for encouraging objection to or evasion of military service.¹⁴ This legislative

move was largely successful in silencing opposition to conscription until 1979 when a number of new developments took place.

Several churches have now raised the issue of conscientious objection through resolutions in their assemblies, while various pacifist groups have attempted to launch a non-military national service scheme to enable conscientious objectors to undertake alternative work. One such is the Voluntary Service Corps established in Cape Town in September 1979 with the aims of training members as ambulance and hospital attendants and of providing a health and education service in the community.¹⁵

At present refusal for military service is punishable in the case of religious objectors by up to three years' imprisonment in SADF detention barracks. Others (i.e. those whose refusal is not backed up by a recognised church whose official policy is conscientious objection to all forms of conscription) are liable by up to two years' imprisonment and/or a R2,000 fine. Such an objector can also be charged again once he has completed his sentence, if he still refuses to be called up.¹⁶ In August 1979 the SADF detention centre at Voortrekkerhoogte held 64 Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced for refusing to serve in the SADF.¹⁷ Since 1975, there have been at least 2,343 convictions for refusal to do military service.¹⁸

The white liberal student press has also taken up the issue of compulsory military service, with some outspoken attacks on the militarisation of South African society, which have resulted in the banning of several student newspapers such as *Varsity* (UCT) and *National Student* (NUSAS).

In general however conscripts who are opposed to military service on either religious or political grounds (because they do not wish to fight in defence of apartheid) find little sympathy in the white community, and have resorted to various forms of avoidance. The government issues no specific figures for deserters or draft-dodgers, but exile groups in Europe and elsewhere are aware of numbers of young men who have left South Africa legally or illegally in order to evade the call-up.¹⁹

Soldiers are being granted privileges and benefits by both the SADF and the civilian sector, all apparently aimed at making those in uniform aware of their importance. A number of cities now allow soldiers to travel free on all public transport,²⁰ and a scheme called "Operation Safe Ride" has been instituted whereby civilian motorists are encouraged to give lifts to soldiers on leave from their bases to their homes. Over 300 special pick-up points have been constructed around the country, which also provide refreshments for the servicemen.²¹ A number of civilian programmes, such as the Southern Cross Fund, provide "home comfort" parcels to all troops serving in the operational areas.

The Southern Cross Fund itself has over 250 branches throughout the country and has spent over R3 million.²² A number of major hotel chains, including the Holiday Inns, offer large discounts to soldiers and their families.²³ "Attractive girls" are recruited to sing and dance for troops in the operational areas²⁴ and the pop music industry is continually bringing out material glorifying the role of the "boys up north". All this effort is aimed at boosting the morale of conscript troops, many of whom, accustomed to the

ease and privilege of life in the white community, find adjustment to military discipline somewhat painful.

"CIVIL ACTION"

The third area of psychological action is perhaps the most important, giving a clear indication of the SADF's intention for the future of the country. The SADF's "Civil Action" programme – also referred to as "Social Action" – is a concerted effort to win over or intimidate the black population in rural areas which are potential, or existing, arenas of guerilla action. This takes place in conjunction with the Bantustan programme which constitutes the major part of the government's "grand apartheid" policy²⁵. Thus in June 1978 a group of South African Bantustan leaders were taken on a tour of Northern Namibia by the SADF. In an interview after the visit, Prof. Hudson Ntsanwisi, Chief Minister of Gazankulu, commented that: "We are very much impressed by what we saw, not only by the military aspects, but also what is being done by the SADF in building or establishing a physical infrastructure for the northern territories – . . . as well as what is being done by the Defence Force to win the confidence of the people in South West Africa."²⁶

The pages of *Paratus*, the SADF's magazine, regularly contain reports of similar visits to the operational area or local military bases by officially-approved black figures.²⁷

As long ago as 1968 the SADF recognised the importance of civilian programmes, particularly in rural areas, with the statement that "military tactics are well and good, but they are really quite useless if the Government has lost the confidence of the people among whom it is fighting."²⁸ This observation was put into practice with the implementation of "Social Action" (a strategy introduced largely under the influence of US military efforts in Vietnam²⁹) which was described in a restricted SADF handbook "Guide to Psychological Action" issued to senior officers in 1976 as "the application of a well co-ordinated combination of assistance designed to improve the living conditions of the population, and raise its cultural level. It contributes to winning the hearts and minds of the population. Social Action is essentially aimed at reaching the population, thus making it more receptive to psychological action."³⁰

Examples of activities are numerous as the SADF publicises this work as a means of showing its "good intentions". Troops in the Western Caprivi were awarded the SA Army's "Sword of Peace". The citation stated that: "In the sphere of agriculture, military personnel have been going to extremes to familiarise the local population with cash farming, as opposed to the traditional subsistence farming. Research projects were instituted in order to exploit the area to the full potential."³¹

Young national servicemen are being used in a growing number of Bantustan areas in both Namibia and South Africa as school teachers,³² technical instructors,³³ advisers and even directors of tourism.³⁴ In the Northern Transvaal the SADF has launched an extensive physical education

scheme for schools in the Bantustans³⁵ and at Jozini on the Swaziland/Mozambique border a large base has been established to win over the people of Kwa Zulu through a scheme involving national servicemen doctors, veterinarians, mechanics, teachers and agricultural advisers. According to the OC Natal Command, the Army's objective is "to show tribesmen that the soldiers in the area are not a menace to them, but are there to protect and help them."³⁶ The fact that the Swaziland/Mozambique border area of Natal is a relatively favoured route for recruits leaving the country to join the liberation forces and for trained men to re-enter, is clearly not lost on the SADF. In order to prevent such traffic (which may be expected to increase, as happened in Rhodesia in the middle phase of the war) the Army must persuade the local population that it is not in their interests to assist the guerillas. A strong military presence, offering material benefits – which may be withdrawn if the recipients prove "unco-operative" – to otherwise poor villagers, is a powerful inducement to give at least tacit support to the security forces. As the example of Rhodesia has shown, however, it may not be enough to stop the people of South Africa from supporting the forces of liberation.

8 THE SADF IN OPERATION

The SADF may be characterised as a conventional military force fighting what is primarily an unconventional war: its main task is not defence against an external aggressor, but combat against "insurgents". The massive increase in the size and strength of the Armed Forces during the 1970's has been undertaken for both present and potential counter-insurgency purposes. To date, counter-insurgency deployment has been largely concentrated in Namibia; the modern military conflict in South Africa is still in its initial stages. To describe and assess the SADF in operation, this chapter therefore offers a brief account of its military actions in Namibia and Angola.

NAMIBIA 1966–75

Ever since 1915, when South African troops invaded what was then the German colony of South West Africa, Namibia has been controlled by South African legislation, police and, more recently, military forces. South Africa's mandate over the territory, granted at the Versailles Conference in 1919, was terminated by the United Nations in 1966, a decision upheld by the International Court of Justice in 1971. Despite this the South African government continued on its own course, defying UN pressure, ignoring attempts made by the Western "contact" group of the Security Council to obtain a negotiated settlement and finally instituting a unilaterally conferred administration in December 1978.¹

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) internationally recognised as the authentic representative of the Namibian people, was formed in 1960 and, having been frustrated in its attempts to bring about peaceful change, launched an armed struggle for liberation against the South African authorities in 1966. The South African government's response to SWAPO has been to subject a growing area of the country to what amounts to martial law and to maintain its repressive domination through the ever-increasing deployment of military forces.

In response to SWAPO's first military initiatives in 1966 South Africa increased the strength of the SA Police units responsible for controlling the Caprivi Strip where the struggle was primarily focussed for the next nine years. At the same time the SAP began training a growing number of its members in counter-insurgency methods. The fact that the SAP was responsible for all counter-insurgency operations in Namibia until about 1971 and in assisting Rhodesian security forces from 1967 to 1975 reflects the regime's strategic perceptions in the late 1960's.

Though a large proportion of the SAP was diverted from its normal duties into counter-insurgency operations, the limited strength of this force suggests that the South African authorities seriously underestimated the potential of SWAPO to escalate its struggle from a level of isolated and intermittent skirmishes and acts of sabotage to a full-scale guerilla war.

Though the government claims that units of the SADF were first deployed in northern Namibia in 1973,² it is believed that by the beginning of 1972, SWAPO operations, both military and political, had reached a level which the police units were hard-pressed to contain. The Namibian workers' general strike of December/January 1971/2 reflected the growing level of SWAPO's political mobilisation.³ Proclamation R17 of February 1972, placing Ovamboland under what amounted to martial law, was an indication of the seriousness with which the South African authorities were beginning to view the situation.⁴ By 1973 the SADF had taken control of all military operations in northern Namibia. The SAP remained in the area in a supportive role. At this stage operations were still largely concentrated in the Caprivi although they were gradually moving westwards as SWAPO's armed units, now named PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), stepped up the struggle.

By 1974 it is estimated that at any one time three national service SADF infantry battalions (a total of approximately 2,500 combat troops) were in operation between Rundu and Katima Mulilo, assisted, from 1972 onwards, by locally recruited black Namibian trackers and by an estimated 1,000 members of the SAP. This scale of operations would have required at least a further 3,000 troops in supportive logistic roles. Two major headquarters, at Katima Mulilo and Rundu, were established as centres of command for smaller bases, each usually manned by a company of infantry (approximately 140 men). Standard counter-insurgency operations consisted of haphazardly organised foot patrols which apparently gave guerilla forces little cause for concern. SWAPO's effective mobilisation in the North was shown in the South African regime's attempt to organise Bantustan elections for Ovamboland in August 1973 when only 2.3% of the electorate turned out to vote.⁵ The failure of this attempt to "democratically" install a collaborative black leadership resulted in an increase in the brutal repression of the local population by South African troops, most overtly through a series of public floggings⁶, but on a wider and less publicised scale through the harassment and torture of large numbers of the population. Torture during interrogation is apparently still standard practice in SADF operations. The majority of the victims of this treatment are members of the local population who are forced under torture to give intelligence on the activities of PLAN forces.⁷

By the middle of 1975, when the SADF's attention was turning towards the situation in Angola, northern Namibia had become what can be described as a typical theatre of low-intensity guerilla struggle with a gradually increasing number of South African troops being deployed in an attempt to contain SWAPO's steady expansion of both military and political activities.

ANGOLA 1975-76

In the day-to-day counter-insurgency operations that, since 1970, have drawn on ever-increasing SADF strength levels, the full potential of South Africa's military capacity had been hidden behind the rigours of a protracted

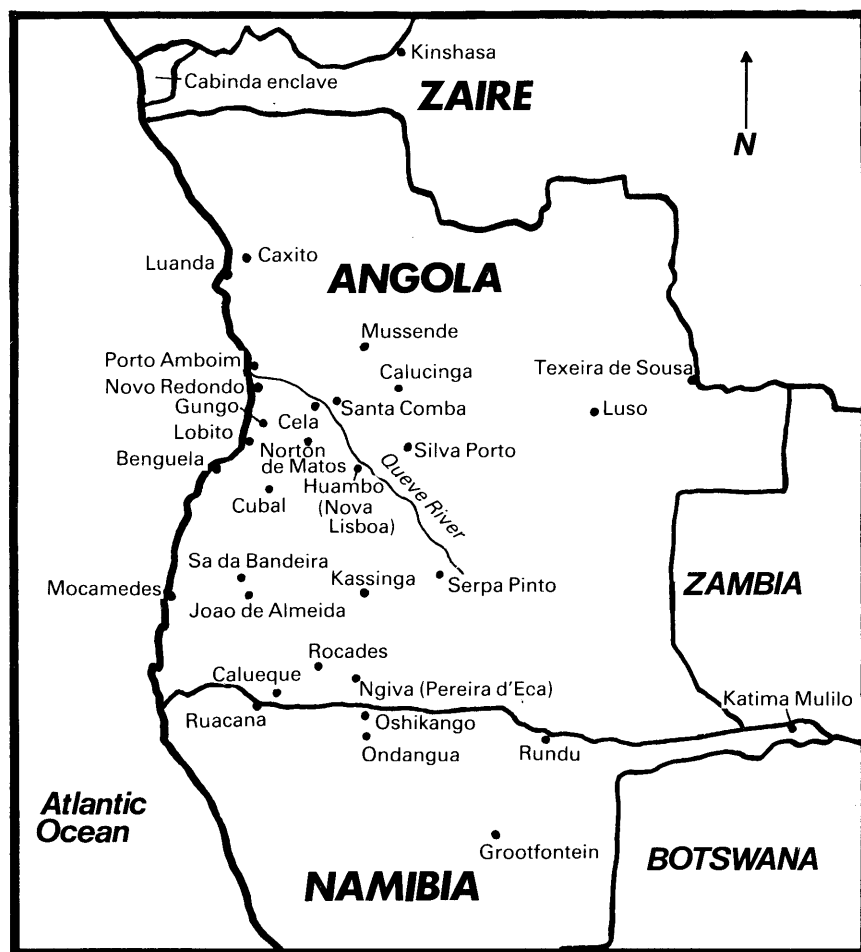
low intensity, unconventional war. While this is in itself a reflection of the requirements facing the SADF a partial insight into the SADF's conventional military potential is to be found in its invasion of Angola in the second half of 1975. This large scale intervention in the affairs of a neighbouring state in an attempt to create a "solution" acceptable to the South African government provided significant indications of the SADF's strategic considerations.

In an attempt to mobilise the people of Angola into resisting Portuguese rule which had exploited Angola for five centuries, the MPLA was formed in 1956 and launched an armed struggle against colonial rule in 1961. Two rival movements, FNLA and UNITA, were established in 1962 and 1966 respectively. Armed resistance against the Portuguese increased steadily through the 1960's and played an important role in political developments in Portugal which led to the progressive coup of 1974 and to the final agreement for the withdrawal of Portuguese rule and the granting of independence to Angola in November 1975. Ideological differences between the MPLA on the one side and the FNLA and UNITA on the other led to the collapse of a tenuous tri-partite agreement at the beginning of 1975 and the FNLA and UNITA subsequently mustered their forces in an attempt to defeat MPLA.⁸

The South African regime's interest in Angola was to a certain extent economic, but primarily strategic. With its natural resources of oil, minerals and agriculture, Angola is potentially one of the richest of South Africa's neighbours and thus an important factor to be taken into account in the regime's desire to dominate the economy of the African sub-continent. In this connection, South Africa had launched, in conjunction with Portugal, a massive hydro-electric and irrigation project to harness the Cunene River. Most of this scheme is based in southern Angola but is primarily aimed at providing water for northern Namibia and electricity for the foreign mining industry further south, particularly to the fast growing uranium complex at Rössing near Swakopmund.

The prospects of socialist states being established in Angola and Mozambique was thought to threaten South African security. This was particularly the case in Angola where the SADF realised that SWAPO's guerilla activities in Namibia would be substantially enhanced if the MPLA was to gain power. The apartheid government's position was thus clear: if at all possible it had to prevent the MPLA from achieving their goal. This could most easily be done by supporting both FNLA and UNITA.

While Angola was under Portuguese rule, the SADF had been allowed free access to southern Angola. For instance, in December 1971 when black Namibian workers went on strike, Portuguese and South African troops were jointly involved in action to suppress resistance that spread in the Ovambo border areas.⁹ After the April 1974 coup a number of colonial Portuguese army officers and security policemen moved south to join the SADF where their experience was welcomed. In the early part of 1975 the SADF began to infiltrate southern Angola in an attempt to win over the local population to the idea of forming a "Groot Ovambo" state that would



incorporate Ovambo people on both sides of the border under South African rule and act as a new buffer zone between Angola and Namibia.¹⁰ This plan was soon superseded by the SADF's decision to commit troops in a comprehensive military campaign. The strategy, developed in conjunction with the United States¹¹, shifted from the objective of protecting the Namibian border areas to the clear intention of destroying MPLA and placing FNLA and UNITA in power in Luanda, the capital of Angola.

FAPLA (the armed wing of MPLA) operations in southern Angola in the middle of 1975 had won over control of most of the south to the MPLA from UNITA forces. At this stage the SADF took its first major initiative, occupying the Cunene hydro-electric works at Ruacana and Calueque in the second week of August.¹² On 22 August a South African force of about battalion strength, supported by Panhard armoured cars and helicopters, attacked and virtually destroyed the town of Ngiva (Pereira d'Eca). SADF operations during August enabled UNITA forces to regain control of these southern areas and South African troops dropped back to positions on the Namibian border. UNITA, confident of SADF backing, formally declared war against the MPLA on 21 August.¹³ An SADF officer, followed by a team of 18 instructors along with anti-tank weapons and machine guns were sent to the UNITA headquarters at Silva Porto during September.¹⁴ According to the SADF, these troops, along with further reinforcements, were responsible for halting a MPLA march on Huambo (Nova Lisboa) on 6 October. This group was reinforced by South African troops and a squadron of Panhard cars in mid-October and became known as the Foxbat combat group. (For location of places, see maps).

The major South African invasion began on 14 October when a joint UNITA/SADF column crossed the border at Rundu.¹⁵ Ngiva was retaken on 19 October and Rocades on 20 October where the column was joined by four troops of Panhards, a platoon of 81mm mortars and a contingency of "Portuguese Liberation Army" mercenaries. According to John Stockwell, CIA officer-in-charge of the US Angola programme, the South African force in this column consisted of 50 armoured cars manned by 250 soldiers and supported by 750 command, artillery and logistical troops.¹⁶ Before entering Angola these troops were completely re-equipped in Grootfontein in an attempt to hide their identity. South African khaki uniforms were replaced by Portuguese green, and troops were instructed to say that they were mercenaries.¹⁷

Known as Zulu battle group, this column, assisted by between 500 and 1,000 UNITA troops, advanced up the Angolan coast with remarkable speed. With stated instructions being the "recapture of as many Angolan towns as possible"¹⁸, the column obviously had its sights on Luanda from the early stages. Joao de Almeida was taken on 23 October. Sa da Bandeira on 24 October and the port of Mocamedes on 28 October. In each town taken, the column reinstated UNITA administrations and then moved on. Benguela was taken after a fierce and crucial battle on 5 November and Lobito on 7 November where the column remained until 11 November.¹⁹

Soon after Zulu column had launched its invasion, a second force, Foxbat,

came into action. According to the SADF account of their exploits, this force "moved from Silva Porto to Teixeira de Sousa and on to the Santa Comba – Cela area to check the enemy advance. . . . From there they moved on to take Caraculo on 27 October, Cubal on 1 November and Norton de Matos on 3 November after fierce resistance."²⁰ This account, if traced on a map defies logical interpretation; for example, Teixeira de Sousa is on the Zaire border and approximately 400 miles from Silva Porto in the opposite direction to Santa Comba. Despite the obvious inaccuracies however, it is clear that by 10 November when Foxbat joined up with Zulu in Lobito, SADF/UNITA forces were operating with a fair amount of success on a 400-mile front stretching from Lobito on the coast, along the Benguela railway line to Luso in the east, as well as controlling the road from Nova Lisboa to Luanda as far north as Santa Comba.

The halting of the SADF advance between 7 November and 11 November was significant for a number of reasons. While the major physical factor was that the bridge over the Queve River had been destroyed by FAPLA, thus hindering the advance on Luanda, it is also evident that Zulu had been battered by a heavy bombardment at Benguela. The FAPLA's one 122mm Katyusha rocket launcher had easily outranged the invaders' arsenal. According to the SADF account, four 88mm guns and personnel then joined Zulu on 11 November. However, given the 88mm's relatively short range, it is more likely that the wait at Lobito was to enable the delivery of M109 155mm guns (recently supplied by the US).²¹ In advancing so rapidly, it is also apparent that the columns overran their supply channels. Though SAAF C-130 transport planes were regularly flying supplies to various UNITA and SADF bases in Angola, and had even picked up consignments from the US in Kinshasa,²² logistic planners required time to consolidate their lines.

The original alleged intention of the SADF to control southern Angola required a South African presence no further north than Mocamedes, Sa da Bandeira and Serpa Pinto. It is thus obvious that by the end of October the SADF had committed its operations towards the capture of Luanda with the hope of "surreptitiously" installing UNITA and FNLA in the capital before 11 November, the set date for independence. This strategy would have been supported at the time by the rapid successes of Zulu between October 14 and 28. It is thus reasonable to assume that FAPLA resistance at Benguela (and later north of Novo Redondo) had been unexpected and that by 7 November the South African commanders realised that they had no chance of reaching Luanda before 11 November. The stop in Lobito was thus necessary to rethink strategy.

To add further to the scenario, Prime Minister Vorster at this stage sent a "high-level emissary" to Washington to clarify the position of the US's support²³ while the UNITA leader, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, flew to Pretoria pleading for the SADF to hold their position until the summit meeting of the OAU, then due to convene on 9 December. According to Robert Moss in the *Sunday Telegraph*, the South African BOSS had received appeals from certain African leaders and "the Americans"²⁴ to remain in position. The SADF's original intention was to be out of Angola by independence. By 11

November, however, it was stuck in a military and political quandary, in occupation of half the country but unable to install its nominees in power.

One issue that needs to be put into its correct perspective is the role of the Cubans in Angola. The South African authorities launched an argument, supported to a large extent by the Western media, that the SADF was forced to enter Angola because of the presence of a large Cuban force. In fact quite the opposite was the case. Cuba first received a formal request for assistance from the MPLA on 26 July 1975 and in response sent three ships containing arms and instructors which arrived in Angola in the first two weeks of October.²⁵ The 238 instructors²⁶ who arrived with this consignment set up four training camps at Belatando, Saurimo, Benguela and in the Cabinda enclave.²⁷ (The SADF account of their first encounter with Cubans in Benguela is corroborated by a number of independent accounts from the Angolan side of Cuban instructors continuing to teach new FAPLA recruits during pauses in the fighting in the battle for the town.) The major influx of Cuban support for the MPLA was known as Operation Carlota, because the decision to commit active troops was taken on 5 November, the 132nd anniversary of a slave uprising led by a woman known as Black Carlota. The first 82 of a special Cuban battalion of 650 arrived by air in Luanda on 9 November, but it took another 11 days for the whole battalion to arrive, transported as they were in ancient Britannia planes. Three overloaded troopships left Cuba on 9 November and arrived in Angola on 27 November.²⁸ The Cubans thus only entered the war in strength in mid-November, three months after the SADF invasion began.

The first three weeks of November were a critical period. FAPLA forces had years of guerilla experience but were not prepared for the conventional war that their defence against the SADF required. Conventional pitched battles had depleted their ammunition supplies to a critical point.²⁹ Despite this they were able to hold enough ground until the Cubans brought relief.

On 12 November Zulu continued its advance, and, after a fierce battle, took Novo Redondo the next day. It carried on north but was stopped at the Queve River, south of Porto Amboim. This may be regarded as the crucial turning point in the war. For the next two months South African troops remained in this area, consolidating their position to the east at Cela and Santa Comba, but, despite considerable reinforcements, they were unable to advance any further. Reinforcements took the shape of two new battle groups deployed at the beginning of December. (The fact that heavy reinforcements were sent north in December clearly indicates that, even at this stage, the SADF was still intent on advancing on Luanda). Orange, consisting of a UNITA battalion, a Panhard squadron, a company of infantry and artillery, operated between Santa Comba and Mussende. X-ray, deployed in the east, captured Luso after a three day battle on 11 December and then operated east of Luso, holding the Benguela railroad in compliance with UNITA's wishes.³⁰

The SADF position was finally cracked in the third week of January. FAPLA and Cuban forces took Cela and Santa Comba on 21 January and Novo Redondo on 24 January. According to one commentator, "after that South African armoured and artillery units started speeding south

considerably faster than they had advanced, blowing up all bridges behind them.³¹ Huambo was abandoned on 8 February and the South African troops withdrew to a front stretching from Rocades to Ngiva, about 50 miles from the Namibian border, where they remained until the final withdrawal on 27 March.³² In the retreat UNITA's headquarters were left exposed, forcing its troops to either move into the bush or return to Namibia for further training. The small force of SADF officers and artillery that had been seconded to the FNLA north of Luanda had already been evacuated after a successful FAPLA initiative in January which had sent FNLA troops back to their base in Kinshasa.³³

The SADF's exploits in Angola can only be interpreted as a military disaster. The aims of the mission – the capture of Luanda and the defeat of the MPLA in the interests of the FNLA and UNITA – were not achieved and an extra R133 million had to be found for the Department of Defence's budget.³⁴ The only aspect which could have pleased the SADF were the outstanding performance of the French Panhard cars which were the backbone of the initial invasion and the fact that useful operational experience was gained.

While it is true that the SADF had many more thousands of troops at its disposal as well as a formidable air strike force that was not used in Angola, the use of these forces would have led to an even greater strategic defeat. In tactical terms the SAAF could have bombed Luanda, but this would have led to international consequences disastrous to Pretoria. Leaving the issue of troop strengths aside, however, there were a number of clear examples of serious misjudgement on the part of Mr. Botha and his generals. If the Orange and X-Ray battle groups had been deployed three weeks earlier in mid-November it is highly likely that Luanda would have fallen. Despite the use of light reconnaissance planes, the fact that the SADF was unprepared for artillery attacks (and hence was not able to advance on Luanda before 11 November) showed a clear lack of foresight, as did the problems faced by the invading columns in maintaining their supply channels. It is also apparent that the SADF overestimated the strength of both FNLA and UNITA and rather than supporting these movements was forced to take all the initiatives.

Within South African ruling circles, the Angolan debacle can be seen, in retrospect, as a watershed in domestic politics between the "hawks" led by Defence Minister Botha and his generals and the "doves" led by Prime Minister Vorster and Gen. van den Bergh (then head of BOSS). By mid-1975 Mr. Vorster's detente initiatives in Africa were well under way. It was subsequently revealed by an academic from the University of Pretoria that Gen. van den Bergh, Mr. Vorster's closest adviser, "was strongly opposed to intervention because of his intimate knowledge of African opinion."³⁵ There was clearly a division in the planning group which finally led Mr. Vorster, "after some hesitation",³⁶ to succumb to Mr. Botha's demands for major military intervention.³⁷

The invasion was not without its effects within South African society as a whole. In an attempt to maintain a cloak of secrecy over the operation, the SADF had banned all reports on its involvement and, despite substantial

evidence published widely in the foreign press from the beginning of November onwards, it continued to deny its presence in Angola. This illusion was shattered when the MPLA paraded two groups of South African prisoners of war before the international press in December and January. The first group was captured in the Cela area on 13 December³⁸ and the second between Gungo and Calucinga on 4 January.³⁹ The fact that the SADF had been lying created a state of temporary disillusionment within white circles. More significantly the effect of the revelation that whites were being held as prisoners of war by black Africans is symbolic of the psychological blow which apartheid South Africa was forced to take in defeat. For the majority of the South African population, however, the invasion was of even greater significance. In their eyes the SADF had been defeated by a black liberation movement and this was a huge source of inspiration. On the basis of the generally accepted understanding that the enemy of the SADF was the friend and ally of the black population, mass support for the MPLA was instrumental in raising the political consciousness of many oppressed people in South Africa. The country-wide resistance that began in Soweto on 16 June 1976 was obviously greatly influenced by the SADF's defeat. If nothing else, a major psychological victory had been won: the SADF was not invincible.

NAMIBIA: 1976 ONWARDS

The victory of the MPLA in Angola was of major significance to the liberation struggle in Namibia. With the invitation to establish bases in Angola, SWAPO from March 1976 onwards began to operate on a front stretching from the Kaokoveld in the west to the Caprivi in the east.

On the South African side, the SADF's Angolan campaign led to the rapid consolidation of a number of new bases in Namibia. The town of Grootfontein was virtually transformed into a military camp where the SADF's Northern Supply Command is based, along with a transit camp that can house at least ten battalions at any one time. Ondangua was expanded into the largest operational headquarters in the north. Ruacana was transformed within months from a small construction village to a major base. Smaller bases were built and manned, usually at company strength, all along the border and inland between Ruacana and Rundu, particularly in the area around Ondangua and Oshikango. Within six months of the MPLA's victory, the SADF had installed its own firmly entrenched military zone against SWAPO operations which, it correctly predicted, increased with rapid success. (For places, see maps.)

The SADF had drastically increased its troop strengths in the second half of 1975. Citizen Force and Commando units were called up for operational duty for the first time, so that by January 1976 there were an estimated 45,000 troops based in Namibia. After the withdrawal of South African units from Angola in March 1976, these troops from the invading force, as well as the many thousand others who were deployed on standby on the Namibian/Angolan border, did not return to South Africa as they expected, but were forced to divert their attention to SWAPO. According to the Johannesburg

Star in March, camps along the border were "filled to bursting point".⁴⁰ Mr. P. W. Botha did not fulfill his promise to halt the conscription of CF members for three-month tours of duty. In May 1976 Ovamboland, Kavangoland and the Caprivi were declared "security districts" under the control of the SADF⁴¹ and plans for the clearance of a 1,000 metre-wide "no man's land" free-fire zone along the entire length of the Namibian/Angolan border were announced.⁴² All SADF operations came under the control of 101 Task Force, based in Grootfontein under the command of Maj. Gen. I. Gleeson who carried out instructions from Pretoria through military area commanders at Ondangua, Rundu and Katima Mulilo. The SAP, with headquarters at Oshakati, continued to play an important supportive role, particularly in the interrogation of "suspects" picked up by infantry patrols.

This military build-up was not altogether successful. According to a deserter from the SADF who had been involved in an operation to clear an area east of Oshikango of guerilla activity in May and June 1976, "We were told that we wouldn't be allowed to go home until the area had been cleared, but by the time we left the level of SWAPO activity was at least double what it had been when we arrived."⁴³ Engineer teams engaged in clearing the free-fire zone were constantly attacked and it was reported that many of the roads in the north were no longer safe for travel.⁴⁴ According to an article in the *Windhoek Advertiser* in June, "the (white) farming community as a whole are panic stricken".⁴⁵

The need to contain the conflict in Namibia was becoming urgent. In November 1976 Mr. Botha called for volunteers for the SADF, stating that South African should prepare to fight a guerilla conflict in Namibia that "might become a limited conventional war".⁴⁶ By May 1977 the government was obliged to introduce legislation to double the period of national service to two years.⁴⁷ This followed further security legislation in April allowing for wider powers of arrest and detention.⁴⁸ An aspect of South African strategy of major significance which came to the fore in 1977 was the decision to move ahead with unilateral plans for Namibian independence with the establishment of an indigenous military force which, under the control of the SADF, would co-operate in defence of this "independence". Black Namibians were first used as trackers by SADF units in 1972. In 1974 a "Bushman" unit was formed and in 1975 two Bantustan forces, the Kavango and Ovambo battalions, were established. In May 1977 the Turnhalle Conference, sitting in Windhoek, discussed and accepted in principle the formation of a "SWA Defence Force".⁴⁹ Before the Turnhalle proposals could be implemented, however, the SADF went ahead with plans to reorganise the structure of military command in Namibia. In August 1977 Maj-Gen. J. J. Geldenhuys was sent to Windhoek to take over SWA Command and responsibility for all military operations in Namibia.⁵⁰ 101 Task Force in Grootfontein, previously directly responsible to Defence Headquarters in Pretoria, now came under the wing of SWA Command which was to move towards an independent operational command. Geldenhuys' brief was to establish a superficially self-sufficient military infrastructure in Namibia and to establish a "national multiracial army" in preparation for "independence".⁵¹ Extensive recruiting campaigns were

launched and a new multi-ethnic force (41 Battalion) with six independent companies based around the territory was established, along with a fourth Bantustan unit, the East Caprivian battalion.⁵² It is estimated that by the end of 1978 at least 4,000 black Namibians were under arms, with many apparently being sent into the frontline of counter-insurgency operations.⁵³

Perhaps the most significant development in counter-insurgency strategy, however, has been the adoption of the "pre-emptive strike" as one of the most effective ways of attacking guerillas. Like the Rhodesian security forces in attempting to deal with the Patriotic Front in Zambia and Mozambique, the SADF has adopted a strategy of hitting guerilla forces in their bases in neighbouring states. As a result SAAF reconnaissance flights over southern Angola have become almost a daily occurrence since 1976. A report issued by the Angolan government lists 193 violations of its territory by the SADF between 1976-9. Bases located by air reconnaissance or through informants are attacked by fighter bomber squadrons and/or ground troops, usually lifted in by helicopter. Guerilla forces have countered these tactics by constantly moving and camouflaging bases and employing surface-to-air missiles with growing success. It has become tragically apparent, however, that the SADF, as is the case with the Rhodesian security forces, attacks not only military bases but refugee camps, civilian installations, and the local economic infrastructure and inhabitants of Angola, Mozambique and Zambia.

The SADF's most publicised attack to date took place in May 1978 on the Namibian refugee camp at Kassinga in southern Angola, about 150 miles north of the Namibian border. Air and ground forces killed 147 men, 167 women and 298 children and wounded over 600 other Namibian refugees. According to the Angolan government, at least 570 Angolan citizens, mostly peasants, were killed in SADF military operations in Angola between March 1976 and June 1979. According to the Angolan report, these South African attacks involve large areas of Angolan territory, containing over one million inhabitants, together with thousands of refugees. The attacks "have resulted in the destruction of our country's basic infrastructures and forced our government to divert a considerable portion of national resources from economic reconstruction to the defence of territorial integrity, for the protection and rehousing of the people who have been victims of the attacks. The systematic series of violations, provocations and acts of aggression are aimed at creating a climate of insecurity and fear, and are part of a concerted plan for the destabilisation of political, social and economic life in the People's Republic of Angola in particular and in Southern Africa as a whole".⁵⁵

Since the end of 1976 the SADF has also invested considerable energy in the "Civil Action" programme in Namibia in a variety of "development" schemes, although it appears that this programme has had limited success. The basic contradiction inherent in all of the SADF's attempts to win the hearts and minds of the people of Southern Africa was aptly spelt out by a junior SADF officer in an interview with an Israeli film crew in northern Namibia in 1977. "We want to win the favour of the local population", the

lieutenant stated, "... I believe it is in the interests of the local population that we tell them what is right and what is not right, and not the terrorists. Their aims ... we do not agree with their aims." In response to the interviewer's suggestion "You don't agree with their aims, but the people do?", the lieutenant admitted, "Yes, this is the problem; this is what the war is about."⁵⁶

A further indication of the all-embracing role of the SADF in Namibia was revealed during the "elections" held in Namibia under South African supervision in December 1978. In the months leading up to the elections it became clear that the SADF was putting all the weight it could into the election campaign of the South African-backed "moderate" Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). Black members of the SADF/Namibian units played a crucial role in maintaining order at DTA rallies and disrupting opposition meetings.⁵⁷ Army vehicles and helicopters displayed DTA stickers. According to a South African journalist, "every second army truck with a white driver behind the wheel gives the DTA sign when passing you".⁵⁸ Approximately 2,500 members of the CF and Commandos were called up specifically to control the elections⁵⁹ and pressmen who spent election week travelling through Namibia found that "the major feature was the large number of South African troops present – clearly an important psychological factor influencing the voters to go to the polls."⁶⁰

Mention also needs to be made of what might turn out to be the scene of the SADF's last stand in Namibia at some future date – Walvis Bay. Despite SWAPO claims, backed by the UN, the SA government views Walvis Bay as South African territory and has repeatedly stated that it has no intention of giving up the enclave.⁶¹ Predictably Walvis Bay is one of the most military-intensive pieces of Southern African soil. The area houses one of the SA Army's elite units – 2 South African Infantry Battalion Group, the SADF's only combined infantry/armour unit, which played major roles in the main invasion of Angola. The nearby SAAF base at Rooikop has all the facilities necessary to serve an air strike force and the harbour (the only viable deep sea port on the Namibian coast) is defended by Marines, while SA Navy warships are regularly in port.

The situation in Namibia in the first half of 1979 suggests that the country is rapidly moving to a level of conflict similar to that of wartorn Rhodesia. While the main fighting is still concentrated in the north, SWAPO forces appear to operate with relative ease throughout the territory. Pre-emptive strikes into Angola have become less successful in pinning down guerilla forces as SWAPO now operates a growing proportion of its troops from bases within Namibia. In May 1979 a modified form of martial law was declared over half the territory, from Windhoek northwards.⁶² Within two weeks of this proclamation what is believed to be the biggest military build-up since the invasion of Angola took place.⁶³ Many white farmers are reportedly making plans to emigrate.⁶⁴ Those that are staying can now buy commercially-marketed armoured anti-mine trucks.⁶⁵

RHODESIA

Within the South African government's view of a "stable" Southern Africa, Rhodesia also plays a crucial role. Historically, economic, political and military relations between the two countries have been intimately co-ordinated. No apparent changes have taken place in this collaboration since the instalment of Bishop Muzorewa as the figurehead of the "internal settlement" in 1978⁶⁶. Following the elections of April 1979, Prime Minister Muzorewa's first foreign visit was to Pretoria.⁶⁷

Units of counter-insurgency-trained para-military South African Police were deployed in Rhodesia in 1967 following a joint guerilla initiative between ZAPU and the ANC(SA). These units officially remained until 1975. Since then South Africans have continued to be deployed in a number of ways. Individual South Africans have been recruited into the Rhodesian forces in substantial numbers. In February 1978 the Patriotic Front accused the Smith government of having recruited about 11,200 mercenaries, including 4,500 South Africans.⁶⁸ While no definitive statement has been made by the SADF, it is common knowledge that South African volunteers for the Rhodesian forces are exempted from their SADF service commitments. There is also a growing amount of evidence appearing that suggests that units of the SADF and SAP have been operating in Rhodesia for a number of years.

According to the London *Guardian*, "reliable sources" in Salisbury were quoted at the beginning of 1978 admitting the presence of South African military and police units throughout southern Rhodesia, as well as at the Kariba Dam in the north.⁶⁹ According to the Patriotic Front, by mid-1979 there were between 5,000 and 10,000 South African troops in Rhodesia.⁷⁰ The clearest indication of SADF collaboration with Rhodesia has been in the jointly planned attacks on the "front line" states. Numerous reports have confirmed the use of SAAF planes and personnel as well as the co-ordination of military intelligence.⁷¹ One example is the report that during a three-day raid by Rhodesian forces into Mozambique's Gaza province in early September 1979, an SAAF Puma helicopter piloted by a three-man crew from the Republic was shot down.⁷²

Of at least equal importance to the supply of troops has been South African logistic support of the Rhodesian security forces. By October 1979 the South African government was said to be funding the Rhodesian war at the rate of £30 million a month.⁷³ Though the Rhodesian government itself has continued its own procurement of arms from Western suppliers, it is obvious that the South African military-industrial complex has become the major supplier of the Rhodesian arsenal. Basic equipment and ammunition is apparently handed over according to needs while major weapon systems, such as Mirage and Impala fighter aircraft, the backbone of Rhodesian attacks into neighbouring states, are "loaned" to the Rhodesian Air Force.⁷⁴

Underlying South African strategic interests in Rhodesia have always been referred to in vague yet ominous terms. In its editorial of May 1979, *Paratus*, the official SADF magazine, stated: "There is no place for terrorist

minorities who seek to impose their personal political wishes on nations at gun point (as they are attempting in SWA and Rhodesia). There the SA Defence Force has an important role to play and the Republic of South Africa can take pride in the fact that its Defence Force needs stand back for none in our area of concern."⁷⁵

In October 1979, during the Lancaster House Conference, South African government sources warned that "the worsening situation is driving South Africa to the critical option of military action". Mr. P. W. Botha referred to "action to counter a takeover by forces of chaos and confusion".⁷⁶ While the South African government at the same time claims that it has a policy of non-interference with its neighbours, it is clear that the SADF is committed to maintaining South African strategic interests in Rhodesia.

During the closing stages of the Lancaster House talks information was made available by the press confirming the crucial role played over the years by South Africa in sustaining the military strength of the Rhodesian security forces, and the illegal regime itself.

On 30 November, formal confirmation of SADF presence in Rhodesia was provided by the South African Prime Minister himself, Mr. P. W. Botha. Addressing a farewell gathering for the retiring head of the SA Air Force, Mr. Botha admitted that South Africa, in consultation with the Muzorewa-Smith regime, had "for some time now been looking to the protection of our interests as well as our vital lines of communication such as the rail link to Beit Bridge and the railway links through it." In justification of this action, he claimed that guerillas of the ANC (SA) had been collaborating with those of the Patriotic Front to attack South African interests in Rhodesia⁷⁷. In reporting Mr. Botha's speech, the *Cape Times* added that SADF troops had been known to have been guarding the Beit Bridge crossing for more than two years and that SADF forces also undertook "limited patrolling" of the railway line further north⁷⁸.

It was also reported that in addition to the 400 regular troops guarding the railway, South Africa had early in 1979 supplied "a large number" of "volunteer" pilots, gunners and technicians to Rhodesia, together with additional Alouette helicopters. South African pilots, mostly regular SAAF officers, are said to "underpin the cutting edge of the counter-insurgency campaign - Fire Force operations". (Fire Force is the name given to the combined use of helicopter and ground attack troops on a "quick reaction" base in the Rhodesian war). The report continued: "It is no secret that Pretoria has encouraged this recruitment just as the Republic has provided much of the money and material for the war effort. The new factor is the extent to which South Africa has moved to make up the shortage of skilled personnel such as pilots, helicopter technicians and gunners"⁷⁹. It was estimated that South African pilots and aircraft technicians flew and maintained as many as 70% of the helicopters used in Rhodesian operations.⁸⁰

9 THE BATTLE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Over the past decade the struggle for liberation in South Africa itself has been steadily mounting. Though the country is not yet involved in a level of armed conflict similar to that taking place in Namibia or Rhodesia, the level of political activity linked with guerilla operations in the urban areas is becoming an increasingly aggravating problem to the SADF. In addition, since the second half of 1978 large rural areas of the Transvaal have become military operational areas to deal with the escalating guerilla war.

While the major part of the SADF's operational energy is at present focussed in Namibia, preparations are well under way for the defence of apartheid South Africa itself. The level of resistance against the state, compared with the unarmed demonstrations of 1976, has continued to increase, most significantly in the escalation of armed struggle in both the urban and rural areas.

Within the urban areas, basic defence planning is as old as the black townships themselves, for their geographical location means that they can be virtually sealed off and effectively isolated when necessary. The role of the SA Police, Industrial Commandos and Civil Defence organisations, all of which are being developed to play crucial roles in combatting urban guerilla operations have been dealt with in earlier chapters. According to the 1977 White Paper on Defence: "The responsibility for combatting internal and especially urban unrest rests primarily on the SA Police. Nevertheless, the SA Army must at all times be ready, on a countrywide basis, to quickly mobilise trained forces to render assistance to the SA Police."

The rural areas on the northern and eastern borders of the Transvaal and Natal have become major areas of SADF concern. Until 1973, when the SA Army took over responsibility for the defence of these areas¹, counter-insurgency units of the SA Police were employed to deal with insurgency and internal security. The SADF realised that SA Police strength was not sufficient to deal with the developing situation and that "it would indeed be irresponsible not to take prior measures to prevent border violations and infiltrations. To this end the presence of troops under training is maintained full-time in these areas. There is no doubt that this early presence of troops in the border areas has had preventive value."² The structure established to co-ordinate military operations was laid out in the 1975 White Paper on Defence: "The planning and conduct of counter-insurgency operations have been decentralised to the existing nine territorial Commands, all under the command of the Chief of the Army. Every officer commanding a territorial command is responsible for measures to prevent insurgency as well as the conduct of active counter-insurgency within his territorial boundaries. For this purpose the Commandos in the area, as well as a number of specially

allocated Citizen Force units, are under his direct command, thus forming an independent counter-insurgency force. Commands have the capability of rendering limited aid to the SA Police and, during disasters, to local authorities without the formal mobilisation of troops. Thus the total area of the RSA is covered by a military presence controlled by nine strategically placed Command Headquarters."

South Africa's borders are long and almost impossible to seal off. Guerilla activity in the Transvaal has been steadily increasing (though still on a relatively low level of intensity compared with the wars in Namibia and Rhodesia). Continuing harsh press censorship by the SADF makes it difficult to ascertain the real nature of the situation. The variance of reporting was evident following the most significant clash between South African guerillas and the SADF to date – a skirmish near Rustenburg in the Western Transvaal at the beginning of August 1978. The South African press reported that three or four "terrorists" clashed with BophuthaTswana police backed up by the SADF and that one had been arrested and wounded.³ According to a report in the London *Times* however, the ANC (SA) was quoted as explaining that their guerillas had fought a four-hour battle with a unit of the SADF reinforced by members of the BophuthaTswana National Guard. Ten South African soldiers were said to have been killed and one captured, with one guerilla captured.⁴

Between August 1978 and July 1979 a total of 30 incidents involving guerilla activity were reported in the South African press. These included ten acts of sabotage (primarily train derailment and the bombing of property), ten clashes between guerillas and security forces and the discovery of six arms caches.⁵ Well-informed observers within South Africa have claimed that those incidents reported in the press are just the tip of the iceberg. According to a study published in South Africa in June 1979, political trials reflect the increasing level and intensity of conflict in the country since 1976.⁶ The report divides political trials into four categories of "crimes": political mobilisation, sabotage, recruitment for military training and insurgency. In 1978 the security police estimated that there were 4,000 black South Africans undergoing guerilla training⁷.

Guerilla action has had a deleterious effect on the morale of white farmers in the border areas. A 1979 government study of the areas bordering Botswana, Rhodesia and Mozambique has shown that nearly half (44.6%) of the farms in these regions are not occupied by their white owners.⁸ The Deputy Minister of Defence warned that "we must secure our border regions, otherwise the white heartland will contract".⁹ Legislation passed during 1978, allowing the SADF to clear any land within 10km of the South African border¹⁰, was the first of a series of new initiatives taken by the South African government in an attempt to secure its borders. In March 1978 Deputy Defence Minister Mr. Coetsee announced the recommendations for a "ring of steel", including the establishment of fortified strong points where farmers would be able to spend their nights, going out onto their farms during the day. According to Mr. Coetsee, the country's borders could be secured by a "chain of protected villages doubling as military bases".¹¹

The recommendations also included plans to recruit young whites who have recently finished their military service into government-assisted "co-operative farming ventures"¹². These farmer-recruits are obliged to live in a "compulsory occupation area", between 30km and 50km wide, along the northern borders.¹³ At the end of April 1979 the Minister of Agriculture announced plans for a scheme involving interest-free loans and other "perks" such as two-way radios to lure farmers to the border regions. The scheme which will cost R65m to R80m in over a six-year period,¹⁴ has been authorised in the Density of Population in Designated Areas Act 1979. In return for these incentives the farmers, who according to a government spokesman, "will be our first line of defence", must have their properties occupied and managed according to government approval. If they refuse they will be fined.¹⁵

The two-way radios are part of a communications system called the Military Area Radio Network (MARNET). Now in operation in the Natal, Northern Transvaal and North Western Commands, this consists of radio stations operated by farmers in identified vulnerable areas which are in constant communication with a permanent control station at the local Commando headquarters.¹⁶

A second crucial facet of the SADF's border strategy is the establishment of military infrastructures within the Bantustans, particularly those located in the abovementioned vulnerable areas (viz. BophuthaTswana, Venda, Lebowa, Gazankulu and KwaZulu). The already established Bantustan forces in BophuthaTswana and Venda are, despite the fact that they belong to "independent" states, directly controlled by the SADF. For instance the BophuthaTswana Minister of Defence, Brig. H. Riekert, has been seconded to the Bantustan from the SADF.¹⁷ Bantustan forces are used not only as a front-line of defence, fulfilling the SADF's aims to create a black vs. black conflict situation, but also to provide an organised labour force to build-up the military infrastructure. When the BophuthaTswana National Guard was formed in 1977, the force consisted of both an infantry battalion and also a construction unit to build a network of military roads in as short a time possible.¹⁸

Linked to the SADF's Bantustan strategy is its psychological action programme (discussed in Chap. 7). SADF doctors, teachers and advisers of the North Western Command won the 1979 SA Army "Sword of Peace" for their work in BophuthaTswana.¹⁹ A similar programme, launched at the beginning of 1977 in KwaZulu, now involves over 60 personnel, including 28 doctors.²⁰ Despite these attempts to win the hearts and minds of the rural population, it appears that the SADF is realistically preparing for their failure. According to the officer commanding Natal Command (who is responsible for the KwaZulu programme) if the local population of border and rural areas did not show loyalty, goodwill and co-operation "we will have to move them out of the critical areas and resettle them."²¹

CONCLUSION

South Africa is today far better prepared for dealing with the threat facing it than it was five years ago. It is equipped both to contain any manifestation of resistance within South Africa and to attack other nations on account of the real or imagined assistance they may give to the liberation forces. Despite the failure in Angola, and the frustration of not being able to maintain a firm grip on Namibia, the SADF in its operations in the north-west has been provided with an ideal training ground for the imminent defence of its own laager.

With Prime Minister Botha now at the helm, defence planning and co-ordination have been streamlined. The SADF has been enlarged and strengthened, and national support for it demanded of the white community. Armscor has made rapid advances in its weapons-production capabilities. Within South Africa, psychological action programmes have been launched without many of the teething problems experienced in such operations in Namibia. The Civil Defence and local Commando infrastructure has been strengthened to the extent that it now represents a powerful defence structure that has not as yet been put to the test. Clearly, the SADF is now a formidable military machine.

Operating within the same theatre of events, however, the liberation movement has also developed its capabilities. It has learnt much from the Zimbabwean and Namibian struggles to add to its own wealth of experience. Furthermore, it operates with one inestimable advantage. Back in 1968, Lt-Gen. C. A. Fraser, then O/C Joint Combat Forces of the SADF, explained that:

the objective for both sides in a revolutionary war is the population itself. Military tactics are well and good, but they are really quite useless if the Government has lost the confidence of the people among whom it is fighting. And by the time their confidence has been lost, more armed force will cause the population to become more antagonistic.

The present South African government does not have the confidence of the majority of the people, who are oppressed and exploited by the apartheid system. The SADF represents one of the strongest, and perhaps the most threatening aspect of this oppression and exploitation.

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Cit	<i>Citizen</i> , Johannesburg
CT	<i>Cape Times</i> , Cape Town
Debates	House of Assembly <i>Debates</i> , Cape Town
FM	<i>Financial Mail</i> , Johannesburg
FT	<i>Financial Times</i> , London
GN	<i>Guardian</i> , London
RDM	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i> , Johannesburg
RH	<i>Rhodesian Herald</i> , Salisbury
ST	<i>Sunday Times</i> , London
Star	<i>Star</i> weekly airmail edition, Johannesburg
Tel	<i>Daily Telegraph</i> , London
WA	<i>Windhoek Advertiser</i> , Windhoek
WO	<i>Windhoek Observer</i> , Windhoek

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The International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa is a humanitarian organization which has worked consistently for peaceful and constructive solutions to the problems created by racial oppression in Southern Africa.

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